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contemplate this Book I see
perfection in its most pleasing form
Turn Gentle Hermit of the dale
And guide my lonely way

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THE

HERMIT.

VOL. I.

THE

HERMIT.

A NOVEL.

By A LADY.

ATKINS

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
Printed for H. GARDNER, opposite St. Clement's Church, Strand; and sold by J. WALTER, at Charing-Cross; and G. PEARCH, at No. 12, in Cheapside.

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THE HERMIT.

18 Dog Gregory, 172 2v.

CHAP. I.

ABOUT forty miles from the Metropolis is a village, for beauty out-vying the many delightful ones with which this iſland abounds.—Verdant fields, enamelled with flowers, are here made ſtill more charming by a ſerpentine river that meanders through them.—Upon the velvet margin of this clair mirror the lovely nymph may contem-

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plate her dazzling complexion, without fear of having it injured by the ſcorching ſun; nature having planted its banks ſo thick with elms, limes, and willows, that though *Phœbus*, in his journey, now and then gives them a glance, yet his rays are ſo mild that the moſt celebrated belle would not have run from them.

THIS walk was to our rural lads and laſſes what the *Mall* or *Green-park* are to thoſe of a more exalted ſphere.

HERE every new gown or cap was ſhewn for the firſt time.—It was here *Amintor* got the bluſhing *Sylvia* to declare ſhe preferred him to *Cimon*;—for, as the damſel rightly obſerved, What are great riches without the man one loves? and, to prove theſe were her real ſentiments, ſhe determined never

ver more to ſee the opulent *Cimon*, who was then in actual poſſeſſion of a mill and two acres of ground.—It was here too, in this very walk, that *Roger* ſwore he would be conſtant to his dear *Suſan*; who, in return, proteſted ſhe had ſooner three of Sir *Francis Gilford*'s beſt cows ſhould die, than that *Tom* the footman ſhould again touch her hand.

AFTER ſuch an aſſurance, could he have any doubt of his *Suſan*'s faith, ſhe being dairy-maid to the Baronet, and, it was thought, loved her *keey* better than any other earthly thing, except honeſt *Roger*.

SIR *Francis Gilford* being at this time the *Goliath*, or, in other words, head man in the village, it will be neceſſary to give my reader a ſketch of

the family at the *Grange*, that being the name of the ſeat in which the *Gilfords* had reſided for a century paſt.

CHAP. II.

SIR *Gregory*, father of the preſent incumbent, was, in every ſenſe of the word, an honeſt man; that is, a good huſband, — a tender parent, — a ſincere friend,—a kind landlord.

Theſe were his characteriſtics. His income, though large, was ſcarce ſufficient for his unbounded generoſity. The worthy and friendleſs were always ſure of a welcome at his table. The indigent, that continually crouded his gates, went not away unſatisfied. Never was ſorrow ſo contagious as at the

the little parish of *Weatly*, when death took from them their patron and benefactor.

LADY *Gilford* wanted her husband's nobleness of soul; but nothing of this deficiency appeared whilst he lived. Her actions might be said to shine through his; nor was her heart unlike those flowers which expand their foliage to the sun, but no sooner is its congenial influence withdrawn, than it again sinks into its native littleness; so was her mind for a time enlarged by the example of her husband, but having lost that, became narrow and contracted.

AFTER the interment of Sir *Gregory*, Hospitality, which in the lifetime of that good man always stood as Porter, was immediately discharged, and his place supplied by Parsimony. As the

former by ſmiles and affability invited all to enter; ſo the meagre and ſour viſage of the latter kept them out as effectually as bolts and bars.

IT was by means of this new ſervant that the preſent heir poſſeſſes an eſtate clearing ſix thouſand *per annum*, which at his father's death hardly amounted to five; yet he could not properly be ſaid to gain by this acquiſition, as it was procured him at the expence of the moſt profound ignorance in all that is learned or polite.

IN the place of *Homer*, *Horace*, and *Virgil*, he ſubſtituted ſuch authors as could beſt inform him in the riſe and fall of ſtock, or inſtruct him in the true value of land; in which he made ſo ſwift a progreſs, that after an exact calculation he found it was ſtill poſſible to raiſe

raiſe his eſtates five hundred annually: this he determined to do by turning out thoſe old tenants of his father's who would not come into his terms.

THE joyful mother's eyes ſparkled with pleaſure to ſee the happy bent of her ſon's diſpoſition; ſhe felt no fears on his account, having moulded his heart according to her own ſordid principles: it had often paſſed the ordeal trial, by being expoſed to the moſt diſtreſſed objects; but, always to the great ſatisfaction of Lady *Gilford*, was hardened by the ſight.

Though mild-eyed Pity was baniſhed by a wrong-judging parent from the breaſt of Sir *Francis*, it was not unmindful of the warm reception it had formerly met with in that of his father; for which reaſon, unwilling to

leave a family where he had been once ſo diſtinguiſhed, he ſhook his dove-like pinions, and flew for ſhelter to the boſom of *Lavinia*; which finding to be alſo a habitation for the Virtues and the Graces, determined from that inſtant to make it his abode. To ſpeak without a metaphor, never were diſpoſitions more diametrically oppoſite than this brother and ſiſter.

OFTEN with inexpreſſible concern had this amiable girl ſeen and ſhed tears at the inſtances of unfeeling inhumanity that peeped out in all his actions, yet ſhe never diſputed with him. She would ſay to herſelf, "If dead to "the pleading of compaſſion, will any "thing that I can urge affect him?" ſtriving by her own benevolence to prevent, as much as ſhe could do, the cruelty he meditated.

YET

YET in this she was obliged to follow closely the rule prescribed us in the Scriptures, Not to let our left hand know what our right hand doeth; for had any of these acts of generosity, which constituted the sole delight of *Lavinia*, come to the ears of Lady *Gilford*, she would have been sure to have fallen under her Ladyship's severe displeasure. Indeed, she had never been a favourite of her mother, whose whole stock of fondness was lavished on Sir *Francis*; nor is this partiality to be wondered at, there being in their sentiments so strict a unity.

AT the commencement of this History, Miss *Gilford* had gained her twentieth year, the first seventeen of which had fled away with a pleasing rapidity: but it was not so with the last three; they had dragged heavily on,

as if upon their wing they bore the troubles which had rent her tender heart: yet to make her ſome requital, they brought to *Weatly*, about ſix months before this period, Mr. *Coventry* and his daughter, in whoſe converſation *Lavinia* found ſuch pleaſure, that in thoſe hours ſpent at *Hartly-row* ſhe almoſt forgot to think herſelf unhappy.

As my readers are unacquainted with this little family, I muſt ſtep back to their firſt arrival, or rather to a ſketch of their hiſtory before that time; but thinking it is a poor compliment to introduce people of their merit at the end of a chapter, I ſhall dedicate another to that purpoſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

IT being a received opinion, that the Feminine gives precedency to the Maſculine, we ſhall for that reaſon beg Miſs *Coventry*'s pardon a few minutes to bring the reader acquainted with her worthy father.

MR. *Coventry* was a man both of family and fortune, had received a liberal education, extremely ſenſible, with a thorough knowledge of men and manners.—He made what is called the Grand Tour, but did not return ſo heavy laden as many of our *Britiſh* youth, being curious to cull none but flowers: as for weeds, he was of opinion we had already too many of our own growth.

BEFORE the age of twenty-five he had visited most of the courts in *Europe*, at none of which he passed unnoticed. A certain great Potentate, of whom he was a particular favourite, would have detained him at ———; but that not suiting with his plan, he declined the Monarch's intended favour, tho' with such modesty and gratitude, that his Majesty honoured him with letters to the *French* Court, wherein he was mentioned in such high terms as occasioned a contest who should distinguish himself most, by shewing civilities to the favourite of so great a prince.

THE death of his father hastened his return to *England*, where he soon after married Miss *Villers*, a young lady of great merit but small fortune, to whom his affections had been long engaged;

engaged; yet as the alliance was not agreeable to his father, Mr. *Coventry* determined to ſacrifice his Love to his Duty; nor would his honour ſuffer him even to hint a deſire to the lady, of keeping her heart reſerved till he might be at liberty to offer her his own in exchange.

NEVER had he openly declared his paſſion; and dreading to ſee that hand beſtowed on another which would have made him happy, he reſolved for ſome years to leave *England*.

EVERY thing being ſettled for his departure, he went to pay a laſt viſit to Miſs *Villers*, whom he acquainted with his deſign.— A tear, which could not be ſuppreſſed, eſcaped her; yet by words ſhe did not attempt to detain him.— They parted.—He ſet out the next day

on

on his travels, whilſt ſhe retired to the conſolatory arms of an indulgent aunt who lived at *Weatly*, both ſecretly in love with each other, and both determined never to marry, if Fate ſhould deny them the object of their wiſhes.

THEIR conſtancy was not put to a long trial; death thought fit to call on the elder Mr. *Coventry* two years after his ſon left *England*; on which event he returned: and no obſtacle now remaining to his union with Miſs *Villers*, they interchanged their mutual vows at the altar.

THE ceremony being performed at *Weatly*, in compliance with the intreaties of their aunt *Preſton*, they ſtill continued her viſitors. The ſituation of this ſweet place had ſomething in it ſo very pleaſing, the happineſs they there en-

enjoyed was so exquisite, that they scarce ever thought of returning into what is called the Great World.

AMBITION often courts those to whom he is most obnoxious; at least it was now the case with Mr. *Coventry*. Lord *L*—, a man in great power, and his cousin-german, well knew how very fit this relation was to support the character for which he had destined him.

AN ambassador was to be sent to the court of ——, when his Lordship proposed Mr. *Coventry*, who was accordingly nominated.

As men are apt to judge of others sentiments by their own, Lord *L*—— thought such an honour could not avoid giving his cousin the highest plea-

pleaſure; for which reaſon a meſſenger was diſpatched to acquaint him with it; at the ſame time deſiring his immediate attendance. Mr. *Coventry* and his Lady received this mandate in a far different manner than was expected by their noble kinſman; their hearts were ſo intirely filled with Love, that Ambition could not find ſo much as a corner to inhabit.

HOWEVER, he determined to accept the embaſſy; but without a view either to honour or profit.—It was the pleaſure of his Monarch that he ſhould go, and this alone at once reſolved him; on which he wrote a polite letter to Lord *L*——, thanking that nobleman, and ſignifying his deſign of coming to town the next week.

MRS.

MRS. *Coventry* determining to accompany her husband, they took a tender leave of Mrs. *Preston*, and set out for the Metropolis.—His credentials were soon ready; they embarked, and after a short delightful voyage arrived safe at ——. Formerly he had resided some months at this court, and was again received with particular marks of esteem.

MRS. *Coventry* met with universal admiration; nor is it to be wondered at, as she surpassed almost every woman in external as well as internal beauties.

THIS confessed superiority did not excite the least spirit of envy; emulation was the only passion she inspired in the breasts of those fair dames.

BALLS,

BALLS, Concerts, Maſquerades had flown away with twelve months, when Mr. *Coventry* received orders to return immediately to *England*, but not till he had declared war with ———: ſuch a command as this he had but little reaſon to expect, as our court and that of —— were at this time ſeemingly on the moſt amicable terms.

HAVING no deſign to dive into the political cauſes for this war, or why Mr. *Coventry* had not been made ſooner acquainted with them, I ſhall only ſay he did as he was directed by his late order.

AFTER taking a polite leave, he embarked with his Lady, though her going was entirely againſt the advice of the learned, as ſhe was very near the time of her delivery.

EVEN

EVEN Mr. *Coventry* uſed every perſuaſion to make her continue at —— till ſhe was delivered.—No arguments could prevail, and they embarked together.

IT is a common and juſt obſervation, That love will ſometimes make a coward of the braveſt.

MR. *Coventry* had never till now known what it was to fear.—Winds had blown from every point: he had, as the Royal Pſalmiſt elegantly deſcribes it, "ſeen the ſea mount to the heavens, and return with equal impetuoſity to the nethermoſt deep," yet his mind continued unmoved:—but now the time was come when his ſoul ſeemed ruffled by every breath of air. —If the weather was fair, he dreaded a calm:

a calm:—again, if it blew freſh, a ſtorm would certainly enſue.—Whole hours would he even deprive himſelf of his Lady's company to walk on the deck, contemplating the hemiſphere: ten times in an hour would he aſk the ſailors if the winds continued favourable.

MRS. *Coventry* on her part, ſhewed much more heroiſm.

SHE ſaw her huſband's anxiety, and knew it was on her account; ſhe therefore exerted her reſolution, which nothing elſe could have made her exert; for a natural dread of the water, joined to an extreme ſickneſs, made her ſuffer a great deal: however, at length they were both relieved by being ſafely landed at *Dover*.

HAVING

HAVING once more ſeen them ſet foot on *terra firma*, we think it high time to put an end to the chapter.

****

CHAP. IV.

A FEW hours after they diſembarked they proceeded to *London*, a houſe in *Great Ormond-Street* being provided for their reception.

THE next morning Mr. *Coventry* waited on his Majeſty, by whom he was moſt graciouſly received; and ſtaying only a ſhort time at St. *James*'s, paid a viſit to Lord *L*——. It was by his Lordſhip he was made acquainted with the reaſons for his ſudden recall to *England*; but as that gentleman deſired them to be kept a profound ſecret,

cret, I do not think myſelf at liberty to diſcloſe of what nature they were.

WE muſt now leave him with his Lordſhip, and return to Mrs. *Coventry*, who, though far from well when her huſband left her, yet had made no complaint; but now found it would be ſoon neceſſary to ſend for Mrs. *D*——; and in a few hours a meſſage was diſpatched to Mr. *Coventry* to acquaint him his Lady was ſafely delivered of a daughter.

CAN my reader form any idea of the joy a poor wretch receives, who having but ten pounds ventures his little all in the lottery; if it turns out a blank he ſtarves, and when his hopes are at the loweſt ebb up comes the ten thouſand:—or ſuppoſe the tranſ-

ports

ports of a man who receives a reprieve juſt as the dreaded muſquets are levelled at his head:—if he can raiſe to himſelf any picture of ſuch ſenſations, then may he in ſome meaſure judge of Mr. *Coventry*'s.

HE handſomely rewarded the perſon who brought him the intelligence; and flinging himſelf into his chariot, ordered to be drove home with great expedition.

THE way from *Hanover-Square* to *Ormond-Street* not being a great length, and the horſes appearing to have caught ſome of their maſter's impatience, he ſoon ſaw the welcome door.

THE ſervant who opened it did not wear a face of joy: the houſe-keeper,

who

who met him in the veſtibule, had melancholy viſibly painted on her's; however, it paſſed unnoticed by Mr. *Coventry*. People happy in themſelves are not the firſt to mark the appearance of misfortunes in others.

WHEN he eagerly enquired after his Lady, and was informed Doctor *Edgcome* would wait on him, without receiving any other anſwer he began to be alarmed.

" DOCTOR *Edgcome!* (repeated he) " For heaven's ſake, Mrs. *Dayly*, what " can all this mean! Cannot you an- " ſwer me? Is your Lady——"

HE was proceeding; but happening to glance his eye towards her's, " O " my God! (he exclaimed) why thoſe " tears? But ſpeak! ſpeak! your ſilence " is,

" is, if poſſible, more dreadful than " my own thoughts!"

STILL Mrs. *Dayly* was ſilent, replying only with her tears: at length ſhe pronounced with difficulty, " My " Lady! my Lady, Sir!" and again her voice was choaked.

THIS was enough: he ſuddenly dropped upon his knees, he lifted his ſtreaming eyes to heaven, and cried out, " Spare, oh gracious God! if " it be thy bleſſed will"——the life of my dear wife, he would have ſaid, but ſobs prevented more.

THE Chaplain, who now entered, judged by his poſture and tears, which ſtill flowed, that already he was acquainted with what he ſo much dreaded to inform him; therefore taking him by the hand as ſoon as he aroſe, " Now

" is the time (ſaid he) my dear Mr.
" *Coventry*, to ſhew both the Chriſtian
" and the Hero."

" THEN ſhe is gone! gone for ever!
" (exclaimed he) but tell me, my
" friend,—nor fear my reſignation to
" the divine will."

" A HEART like yours (replied that
" gentleman) will always think and
" act as it ought.—We ſhould not ſet
" our minds too much on any thing
" here below.—Mrs. *Coventry*, whilſt
" on earth, lived the life of an Angel;
" do not then repine that ſhe has now
" for ever joined thoſe Bleſſed Spirits.
" This is a trial ſent you from the
" Almighty;—bear it you muſt;—
" therefore, ſince it is unavoidable, bear
" it like a Man;—one who hopes to
" meet her again where you will never
" more be diſunited."

THIS

THIS being a favourite topic with the good man, he would probably have carried it much farther, if the ſudden fall of Mr. *Coventry* had not interrupted him.

HIS fortitude was not equal to his reſignation; for no ſooner did he hear ſhe was really dead, than his eye-ſight forſook him, and he fell ſenſeleſs on the floor.

DOCTOR *Edgcome* was much alarmed; he rang the bell, and the ſervants ſoon came to his aſſiſtance. Mr. *Coventry* was immediately conveyed to bed, where his recovery was for a long time doubtful.

HOWEVER, the apprehenſions of his friend were at length removed; but a phyſician, who was called in,

ſtill thought him in great danger from the fever into which this ſhock had thrown him.

WHOEVER are ſolicitous for the recovery of this worthy unfortunate gentleman, may receive the gratification of their wiſhes in the following chapter.

CHAP. V.

READERS,—if any of you are of the ſame way of thinking with the Wiſe Man, who ſays "it is bet-"ter to go to the houſe of mourning "than to the houſe of mirth;" if any ſuch there are amongſt you, I not only permit, but alſo invite you to ſtay ſome little

little time longer in *Ormond-Street*, where you ſhall behold real ſorrow; not ſuch as Lady *R*—— expreſſed for the loſs of her Lord; nor does it bear the leaſt ſimilitude to *Jack Hampton*'s, when, by the death of his elder brother, he came to the title and eſtate.

MR. *Coventry*'s tears flowed not through the channel either of faſhion, cuſtom, or hypocriſy; they came directly from a heart where the image of his deceaſed wife afforded them a continual ſource; yet time, that kind healer of woes, with the preſence of the little *Maria* in ſome degree ſtopped their current, and calmed, if not ſuppreſſed his afflictions.

MARIA was, at leaſt in his opinion, the exact reſemblance of her dear mother. Often would he ſit and gaze

whole hours on the miniature, and contemplate her growing charms, which every day received improvement from the hand of Time, that ſeemed reſolved to ripen ſo fair a bloſſom, and bring it to perfection, that the root from which it ſprung might not ſink into oblivion.

MR. *Coventry* ſaw the beauties of his daughter; he ſaw them with ſatisfaction, with delight, but not without reflection. He rightly judged that an edifice, though ever ſo richly decorated by the artiſt's hand, ſoon comes to decay; his chief care, therefore, was to fit up the apartments of her ſoul, not only as they were more durable, but more worthy of his care.

THE cardinal Virtues he placed neareſt her heart: Affability, Generoſity,

ſity, and Humanity, with a thouſand other nameleſs ones, were ranged by him in ſuch beautiful order, that I can only ſay, in one word, in mind and perſon *Maria* was the maſter-piece of Nature.

SHE had now attained her fifteenth year, in which time her father's fondneſs had never ſuffered her to be from him; yet he took care not to let her feel this partiality to her diſadvantage.

MASTERS of all kinds had been procured to teach her the polite languages, whilſt a governeſs was provided to inſtruct her in thoſe accompliſhments young ladies of faſhion are expected to poſſeſs.

MR. *Coventry*, though much againſt his inclinations, ſtayed in town till

Maria was ſixteen, when he propoſed once more to viſit the dear ſpot where he had paſſed ſo many hours of felicity with his beloved wife.

ONLY one diſagreeable circumſtance could attend his removing to *Weatly*. He knew his daughter's duty would not oppoſe any plan of life he approved; but was he ſure her heart would chearfully acquieſce to leave the *beau-monde*, and that general admiration ſhe was ſure to inſpire, wherever ſhe appeared? This reflection gave him uneaſineſs; and nothing but an inclination for retirement, which he could not conquer, would have made him propoſe it to her.

How agreeably was he ſurpriſed to hear his ſweet *Maria* declare, on his firſt hinting it, that nothing could poſſibly make

make her more happy than ſuch a retirement as he deſcribed!

"WE ſhall there, my dear Sir, "(ſaid ſhe) find people who will tell "us their true ſentiments without "flattery: ſincerity and friendſhip are "ſurely confined to thoſe charming "rural retreats."

MR. *Coventry* did not think exactly with his daughter, yet made no diſcouraging reply, unwilling to deaden the rapture with which ſhe embraced his propoſal: however, he knew too much of mankind to ſuppoſe the Virtues had taken up their reſidence in any particular ſpot, knowing they were diſperſed abroad; and that whoever are willing to entertain them, whether in a public circle or a private ſhade, whether in a court or cottage,

may always find them ready for admittance.

ABOUT ſix weeks after this reſolution, Mr. and Miſs *Coventry* took a genteel leave of their general acquaintance, and an affectionate one of Lord *L*——, who was really a worthy man, and had ſhewn himſelf their ſincere friend on all occaſions.

ACCOMPANIED by doctor *Edgcome*, they left *London*, and without any accident or adventure worth relating, arrived ſafe at *Weatly*.

HAD Mr. *Coventry* conſulted only his own inclinations, he would have declined any acquaintance with the families who had alſo made that their place of reſidence; not out of any diſlike to them, but a thorough diſre-

liſh

liſh of company: yet, for *Maria*'s ſake, he encouraged thoſe advances that were made, and ſeldom a day paſſed without their receiving viſits.

MISS *Coventry*'s charms were echoed from all mouths, and in enumerating them they had not forgot to mention her fortune.

FIFTY thouſand pounds, and ſuch a lovely girl, could not fail to turn the heads of all the young fellows of faſhion in or about *Weatly*.—Her appearance at church the *Sunday* after their arrival, gained her the hearts of the whole village, from the lofty baronet down to the ſpruce attorney.—Thoſe who had either mother or ſiſter, intreated they would by ſome means or other make an acquaintance at *Hartly-Row*.

THE heart of Sir *Francis Gilford*, which was imagined till now to be made intirely of flint, was, to the ſurprize of all, but to none more than his mother, found to have in it ſomething of a combuſtible nature; for it was moſt certain his conſumed with the multitude.

HER Ladyſhip and her amiable daughter felt great pleaſure at this unlooked-for event, though from very different motives.——His ſiſter, who well knew the effects of that paſſion, hoped its influence would humanize his ſoul, and ſoften his bear-like temper: yet if it had not this deſired power, ſhe ſincerely wiſhed he might not ſucceed, as it was impoſſible for a man of his diſpoſition to make happy one ſo mild and gentle as Miſs *Coventry* was reported to be.

LADY

LADY *Gilford* conſidered nothing but the fortune ſhe would bring into her family, which anſwering her moſt ſanguine expectations, ſhe congratulated Sir *Francis* on his choice; and a card was inſtantly diſpatched to inform Mr. and Miſs *Coventry*, that, if agreeable, they would wait on them the next afternoon.

A POLITE and ſatisfactory anſwer being received to this little billet, I ſhall leave them to conſult on the important article of dreſs, and cloſe the chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

SIR *Francis*, though mighty plain in his common appearance, would, on this extraordinary occaſion, have dreſſed himſelf to the beſt advantage: but alas! in what a dilemma do we find him? without ſo much as a trimmed coat or bag-wig to appear in before his miſtreſs.

AT length it occurred to him that he had never viſited his late father's wardrobe, which might poſſibly afford him ſome relief in this moment of exigency. He flew to his mother, demanded the keys, and haſtened thither with more impatience than I can well deſcribe.

HAVING

HAVING rummaged over and over every drawer, every box, every trunk, being diſtracted in his choice amidſt more finery than he expected to meet with, at length he laid his hands on a rich ſuit that ſeemed, as they lay in folds, to pleaſe him mightily; and pulling them out from under a heap of other things, equipped himſelf on the ſpot, and then went down to have his mother's opinion of his choice.

LADY *Gilford*, when ſhe ſaw him enter her room, cryed out, ſurveying him from top to toe, "This muſt do, "my dear, this muſt do, or Miſs *Co-* "*ventry* will not think as I did: the "firſt time Sir *Gregory* came to viſit "me in theſe very cloaths, I thought "him the moſt graceful figure I "had ever beheld. There is magic "in theſe cloaths.——Ah *Frank!* "there

" there will be no withſtanding you. " Miſs *Coventry* will ſoon put you in " poſſeſſion of her thouſands."

THE vain fellow ſmiled a look of aſſent, and fixing his long unmeaning eyes on an oppoſite glaſs, replied, " Indeed, Madam, I muſt confeſs " your ſon makes no deſpicable figure: " — I think I am tolerable.—I think " I am not an object to be refuſed ;— " I think I am not—Yet damn theſe " women, my Lady ; there is no an- " ſwering for their capricious humours."

" BUT, my dear, (added her Lady- " ſhip) your father had a very pretty " ſword, wig, and ſtockings, that, " poor man, he always uſed to wear " with this ſuit ; I fancy you may find " them, and then your dreſs will be " complete."

AWAY

AWAY went Sir *Francis* in purſuit of theſe valuable acquiſitions; and having been ſucceſsful in his ſearch, when the coach drew up to the door which was to convey them to Mr. *Coventry*'s, he offered his hand to help in the ladies, one of whom could hardly refrain from an immoderate fit of laughter, this being *Lavinia*'s firſt interview with her wife brother, ſince he became a beau of the laſt age.

That my Readers may not accuſe Miſs *Gilford* of laughing at her own folly, I muſt in juſtice exhibit the very ſtriking figure of Sir *Francis*.

HIS perſon was tall, corpulent, and bony; his face long, pitted with the ſmall-pox, without ſentiment, and never ornamented with a ſmile but to anſwer ſome ſiniſter purpoſe; and on this

this occaſion it was ſo very conſpicuous, that it may more properly be termed a convulſion than a ſmile. The only tolerable thing about him had been his hair, which three months before his tender mother obliged him to cut off, thinking, perhaps, his head heavy enough without it: now a round bob ſupplied its place, and muſt have paid Miſs *Coventry* a viſit with its maſter, had it not, for that day, been very fortunately ſuperſeded by a magnificent wig of his father's, whoſe three tails dangled on his broad ſhoulders. A full-dreſſed ſuit of dark green grogram, richly trimmed with a broad gold lace, fitted him very nicely after it was on; though we muſt confeſs, nothing but the moſt violent paſſion for *Maria* could have ſupported him in the arduous trial, whilſt he worked, fumed, and tugged to get entrance

trance into the ſleeves, &c. His legs would have been wonderfully handſome, if Nature had not, in fixing them to his body, made a ſtrange miſtake, and put that part to his knee, which muſt have been deſigned to join with his foot. Sir *Francis* had not himſelf perceived this miſtake, and thinking them as worthy of notice as either his head or body, had ornamented them with a pair of crimſon ſtockings, richly wrought at the ancles, and gartered very exactly.

WITHOUT exaggeration, ſuch was the figure of Sir *Francis:* may not then the inclination for mirth which his ſiſter betrayed, be eſteemed a natural and very excuſable emotion?

THE young baronet, on his return from *Hartly-Row*, found himſelf as much

much in love as it was poſſible for one of his diſpoſition to be, but without being acquainted with any of the refinements of that paſſion.

LADY *Gilford* expreſſed her approbation of Miſs *Coventry* in high terms; but neither her Ladyſhip nor her hopeful ſon were capable of diſtinguiſhing that young Lady's value: her lovely perſon, but more her princely fortune attracted their notice.

LAVINIA declared Miſs *Coventry* to be the moſt deſirable, beautiful, and accompliſhed woman ſhe had ever ſeen. "Indeed, brother (ſaid ſhe), you muſt "be extremely happy, if this Lady "ſhould approve your addreſſes."

"IF! (repeated he in a ſupercilious "tone) *if!* Pray, what reaſon can "there

" there be to doubt it? Think you,
" child, Mr. *Coventry* will be ſuch a
" fool to refuſe a man of my figure?
" a man of ſix thouſand a year?—a
" man of title?".

" MR. *Coventry!* (cryed *Lavinia*,
" ſmiling) I imagined it was his
" daughter's heart you wanted to ſo-
" licit."

" WHY, ſhould ſhe give it me vo-
" luntary, which I think ſhe cannot
" avoid, to confeſs the truth, *Levy*, I
" ſhould not like my bargain the
" worſe for having it thrown into the
" purchaſe."

" I FANCY, Sir, you will find your-
" ſelf miſtaken, if you intend to pur-
" chaſe either Miſs *Coventry*'s perſon
" or heart."

" BE

"BE that as it may, I am eaſy about "the matter: however, I ſhall have "one trial with her father. My re- "liance is on him: he knows, I war- "rant, how many ſhillings make a "pound."

"FIE, fie, brother!" ſaid the love- ly girl, a bluſh of reſentment unit- ing the roſe to the lily; "If theſe "are your real ſentiments, do not re- "peat them. This afternoon, (con- "tinued ſhe) I wiſhed you might mar- "ry Miſs *Coventry*. That wiſh, I own, "was from a ſelfiſh motive: I was "ambitious of being related to ſuch "a woman:—I longed to call her "ſiſter.—After what you have ſaid, "you cannot be deſerving ſo great a "treaſure."

"AND fie on you, *Lavinia!*" cried Lady *Gilford*, drawing up her ſtiff neck,

neck, whilſt Sir *Francis*'s odious face was puffed out with paſſion; "Fie on "you, child! Sure you have not con- "ſidered on what you was ſo bold, ſo "daring, to ſay. Certainly your bro- "ther is deſerving of Miſs *Coventry*.— "Deſerving, indeed! Has he not an "eſtate adequate to her fortune? Has "he not a title? and a title, girl, is "not ſo lightly to be eſteemed."

"OH! you are miſtaken, Madam, "(ſaid the malicious ſnarler, biting "his blubber lip with vexation) "you are miſtaken; title is a mere "bawble in her better judgment, or "ſhe would not have refuſed my "friend: ſhe would not have carried "herſelf with ſuch haughty airs to Sir "*William More*, and have taken up "with a fellow every way his in- "ferior."

"OH

" OH brother, brother! (replied the " weeping *Lavinia*) how meanly, " how cruelly, do you remind me of " that unhappineſs you aſſiſted to " bring upon me! Do you not bluſh " to call that vile man your friend?— " He ſuperior! Sir *William More* ſu- " perior!——If you have the leaſt " regard to ſacred truth, inſtantly re- " cal your words, unleſs you meant to " ſay in every kind of wickedneſs. If " that was your meaning, I own, in- " deed, you are right: greatly in that, " is Mr. *Gore* inferior to Sir *Wil-* " *liam!*"

" ROMANTIC girl! (foaming with " anger) You would, no doubt, run " after this good-for-nothin g wretch, " did you but know where to find " him. No, no, girl, fool as I think " him, he is too wiſe for your arts: " he

" he will not be troubled with you. " But don't cry, *Levy*, (ſeeing he had " brought tears to her eyes) don't cry, " my pretty forward Miſs; Sir *Wil-* " *liam* will be here ſoon, and depend " on it, you ſhall not go without a " huſband."

" SIR *Francis*, (replied ſhe, ſpirited " up by this laſt inſult) how dare you " uſe me thus?—What right have " you to diſpoſe of me?—I tell you, " Sir, once again, that all the powers " on earth ſhall never force me to be " the wife of a man I hate, deſpiſe, " and loath."

COMPANY coming in at this inſtant, prevented the enraged Sir *Francis* from making the anſwer he had, no doubt, meditated, and alſo a ſevere reprimand from Lady *Gilford*, who was

ready to ſtorm at hearing her darling treated ſo freely by his ungracious ſiſter.

BEFORE the viſitors were ſeated, *Lavinia* took an opportunity to leave the room, in order to wipe away thoſe tears her brother's ill uſage had occaſioned, and to give a ſigh to the memory of Mr. *Gore*; which being diſpatched, ſhe again returned to the drawing-room with a countenance that bore no bad reſemblance to an *April* morning. Like that blooming month, her face was dreſſed with opening bloſſoms: the ſnow-drop hung upon her cheek; her eyes were tinged with the violets blue; whilſt her breath exceeded the ſweetneſs of that flower.

THE company, who all roſe at her entrance, being again replaced, purſued

ſued their converſation, which her appearance had interrupted.

MR. and Miſs *Coventry* were their topics. The latter, it ſeems, was paſſing a ſevere ſcrutiny; and the two Miſs *Jones*'s had, as they flattered themſelves, diſcovered many defects in her really faultleſs perſon. The eldeſt with particular energy pointed them out to Sir *Francis*, who ſhe had long thought a conqueſt worth obtaining.

"I CANNOT for my life (ſaid ſhe) "ſee thoſe thouſand beauties in the "eyes of Miſs *Coventry*, which my "couſin *Jack* is continually talking of. "Only obſerve them when you ſee her "next, Sir *Francis:* they are cut ſo "very long!——Well, I proteſt their

" ſhape do not pleaſe me; nor is black " by any means my favourite co- " lour."

" INDEED, ſiſter, (added Miſs *Patty*) " there is a ſweetneſs in them which I " cannot help thinking agreeable; yet " I confeſs it is very wonderful that a " young Lady reported to have ſo great " a ſhare of ſenſe, ſhould paint, tho' " it is laid on very cleverly."

" ODIOUS! (cried Miſs *Jones*) Well, " that is a faſhion I never could ac- " commodate myſelf to.—Pray, Sir " *Francis*, is not her hair two ſhades " lighter than the true cheſnut? For " my part, I have only as yet had a " tranſient view of this all-excelling " beauty."

THE

THE Baronet being thus called upon, ſaid, for his part (yawning as he ſpoke) he was no judge of women's matters: he thought her very well altogether; but rot him if he could tell whether her hair was dark or light.

MR. *Knowles* and Mr. *Neſbit* readily acquieſced with the ſentiments of Miſs *Jones*, though in their ſouls each heartily diſavowed them; but they were too polite and too well-bred to contradict the Ladies.

MR. *Hunter*, a gentleman not quite ſo well-bred as the very polite Mr. *Knowles* and Mr. *Neſbit*, having liſtened patiently, ſaid with a deal of humour, "You are right, Miſs *Patty*; "Miſs *Coventry* is moſt certainly "painted:"

By Nature alone ſhe is painted and dreſſed,
Roſes will bloom when there's peace in the breaſt."

This he ſung with ſuch an air of reproach as made them both bluſh, particularly the perſon to whom he addreſſed his ſatire.

"Now (continued he) will any "body allow themſelves to think Miſs "*Coventry* does not carry peace in her "breaſt?—How can ſhe avoid being "pleaſed and happy, when ſhe gains "a new admirer in every man that "beholds her?"

THOUGH, after this reproof, their envy did not again appear, yet it was not dead, but only ſunk back to hearts in which it had been long nouriſhed.

MISS

MISS *Jones*'s being leſs perfect miſtreſſes of any other ſubject than that Mr. *Hunter* had interrupted, ſpoke little the remainder of their viſit, which ended at ſeven.

IF any of my readers after that hour, in the month of *June*, and the fineſt evening in that month, are inclined for a ſolitary walk, I invite them to attend *Lavinia*, who having tyed on a ſtraw hat lined with blue, and thrown a handkerchief of the ſame colour on her neck, is proceeding all alone to that pleaſing walk I deſcribed in my firſt chapter; her brother ſtill too much irritated to eſcort her: rancour and reſentment were weeds which could not fail to flouriſh in a ſoil ſo uncultivated, whilſt her boſom, forgiving as Mercy, only ſighed at his unkindneſs.

As *Lavinia* purſued her walk, ſhe thought inceſſantly of Mr. *Gore*, and in this manner meditated on her wrongs:

" ALAS! (ſaid ſhe) the moſt worthy " of men believes me fickle, incon- " ſtant;—he ſhuns,—he flies me;— " he regards me as the enemy of his " repoſe.—Ah! how could they de- " ceive a heart like his!—Vile, vile Sir " *William!*——Thy *Machiavelian* arts " have for ever robbed me of him.— " Every ſtep I take reminds me of my " loſs.—How applicable to me are " theſe beautiful lines I have ſo often " read, ſo often admired, in a ſweetly- " diſtreſſing monody:"

" In vain I look around
" O'er all the well-known ground,
" My lover's wonted footſteps to deſcry!
" Here oft we uſed to walk,
" Here oft in tender talk
" We ſaw the ſummer ſun go down the ſky."

Lavinia could not ſuppreſs her tears at the recollection of paſt ſcenes.

"IT is the opinion of a celebrated "poet, That there is a pleaſure in "madneſs which none but mad-men "know; ſo it is mine alſo, that there "is certainly a pleaſure in the enjoy-"ment of melancholy ideas, which "none can be a judge of, except thoſe "to whom they have been familiar."

THOUGH Miſs *Gilford*, at this inſtant, had not a thought but what was inſpired by the goddeſs *Melpomene*, yet ſhe would not have exchanged them to have ſeen the inimitable *Garrick*, or to have heard the warblings of a *Pinto*.

THE melody of the latter was well ſupplied by a harmonious *Philomel*,

perched on a tree under which *Lavinia* had placed herſelf.

THOSE who underſtand the nature of love will alſo know, that paſſion is generally attended with ſome degree of poetic rapture. *Lavinia* liſtened a few moments with fixed attention to the muſical notes of her little feathered companion, and then exclaimed in the words of her moſt admired poet:

" With ſuch variety and dainty ſkill
" Yon nightingale divides her mournful ſong,
" As if ten thouſand of them through one bill
" Did ſing in parts the ſtory of her wrong."

HERE her contemplations were agreeably interrupted by the appearance of Mr. *Coventry* and his fair daughter, who, invited by the ſerenity of the evening, were come to this enchanting walk to enjoy it in full perfection.

LAVINIA and *Maria*, who at firſt ſight had been equally prejudiced in favour of each other, did not try to hide under the formal maſk of ceremony their mutual pleaſure at this unexpected meeting.

LAVINIA had high, perhaps romantic notions of friendſhip. The firſt time ſhe ſaw and converſed with Miſs *Coventry*, ſhe thought herſelf convinced, ſhe ſhould in that young Lady find the phænix ſo many had in vain ſearched for, a ſincere and tender friend.

FAR, very far am I from thinking ſuch a treaſure is never to be attained; neither do I hold it ſo eaſy an acquiſition as many unexperienced creatures of both ſex believe it.

WHEN Lord *W*—— or Sir *Harry* —— ſhakes a thouſand voters by the hand, ſwearing to each he is their eternal friend, he proſtitutes the name.—Friendſhip is a ſacred fire. To preſerve its flame bright and laſting, it is neceſſary to light it up in hearts free from envy, ambition, or any of theſe extinguiſhers, as were our firſt parents before they had taſted the forbidden fruit, or as the boſoms of *Maria* and *Lavinia*.

TIME was ſo agreeably winged with a very pleaſing and rational converſation, that they did not obſerve the approach of Veſper till ſhe had actually wrapped them in her dark mantle.—*Lavinia* was ſo much importuned both by Mr. and Miſs *Coventry* to ſpend the remainder of this evening (which her company had made ſo delightful)

lightful) at *Hartly-Row*, that she at last consented; and as soon as they reached it, a servant was dispatched to prevent Lady *Gilford* from being uneasy at the absence of her daughter.

SIR *Francis* was with her Ladyship when the message came from *Lavinia*, and in spite of himself could not help being pleased at the thoughts of her cultivating an intimacy with Mr. *Coventry*'s family, into which he hoped to be very soon received.—Nature having endowed him with a sufficient degree of cunning to enter it on the footing he wished, he found it would be absolutely necessary to wear a disguise till marriage should enable him to throw it off with safety.

BEING determined to follow his own ingenious devices, he very wisely re-

reſolved a thorough alteration ſhould be his firſt ſtep; not an alteration of heart, but only of manner, regarding his behaviour to *Lavinia*.

"I AM ſorry, my Lady (ſaid he) "that I have taken off the cloaths I "wore this afternoon; but they were "ſo plaguy tight, I could not ſit in "them with any eaſe to myſelf. If I "had not been in ſuch curſed haſte, I "might have gone to eſcort *Levy* "home from *Hartly-Row*; it would "have been a d——d good opportu-"nity."

"AND why, my dear (replied her "Ladyſhip) will you not go as you are? "You know Miſs *Coventry* has ſeen "you full-dreſſed. I dare ſay ſhe does "not forget the figure you made yeſ-"terday afternoon.—Ay, ay, I often "ſaw

" ſaw her eyes fixed on you, *Frank*.
" Come, come, go my dear; I per-
" ceive your mind is ſet on it.—She
" muſt ſome time or other ſee you in
" *diſhabille*. What ſignifies if it be
" this night or a month hence"?

THUS encouraged, he ſurveyed himſelf from ſhoe to wig, turned the latter three or four times on his clumſy fiſt, called a ſervant, bad him throw a little powder over it, and bring him his gold-headed cane, determining at all events to gratify his inclinations.

ABOUT ten o'clock *Lavinia* was greatly ſurpriſed to ſee him make his appearance at *Hurtly-Row*. That lowr which uſed to ſit on his brow was intirely baniſhed, and good-nature, though he had only uſurped it for a time, wrought ſuch an alteration, that he

he paid his reſpects to Mr. and Miſs *Coventry* with a grace that aſtoniſhed his ſiſter.

"SIR *Francis*, (ſaid that gentle-
"man, ſhaking him very heartily by
"the hand) as this viſit is unexpected,
"we ſet on it the higher value: but
"let me add, Sir, though I gain one
"pleaſure I loſe another, as before
"you came I propoſed being Miſs *Gil-*
"*ford*'s eſcort to the *Grange*."

"I WISH, Sir, (replied Sir *Francis*,
"who was by this time quite a ſecond
"*Cymon*) you had kept your intentions
"a ſecret: my ſiſter, I fear, will ſcarce-
"ly pardon me for robbing her of ſo
"agreeable a conductor; and, upon
"my honour, nothing would make
"me more unhappy than to offend her."

LAVINIA, after what had paſſed that day, and indeed for many years, doubted with great reaſon the truth of this aſſertion; yet ſhe returned him a gracious ſmile, and the higheſt good-humour ſubſiſted till twelve.

NOTWITHSTANDING the ridiculous appearance Sir *Francis* made the preceding day, when his dreſs pronounced him a ſtupid fool and conceited coxcomb, yet, diveſted of theſe enſigns of folly, he was ſo very fortunate as to work a favourable change in the opinion of Mr. *Coventry*, who began to regard him as not altogether incapable of rational converſation, and to think the abſurdity of his cloaths rather owing to the narrowneſs of education than from want of underſtanding.

INDEED,

INDEED, he had never ſhone half ſo bright as this evening. Luckily no ſubject had been brought on the carpet which required any degree of learning to ſupport, and he had the cunning to adopt ſo intirely his ſentiments to thoſe of the company, that he appeared to all but *Lavinia* liberal, compaſſionate, humane, in ſhort, to be as full of thoſe virtues as he was in reality of their oppoſites; and he carried on this deceit ſo long, till he had actually impoſed it on his ſiſter.

OFTEN would he beg her pardon for being the means of preventing her from marrying Mr. *Gore*; and one day he went ſo far as to aſſure her, if that gentleman ſhould ever more return, he would no longer influence his mother to oppoſe their union. "To "ſhew you, *Levy*, that I am ſincere (con-

" (continued he), I am determined to " break with Sir *William More*. You " know he expects, on his return from " *London*, that Lady *Gilford* and I " ſhall puſh the match; but he will " now find a cold friend in me.— " In return, may I not expect, *Levy*, " you will be my advocate with Miſs " *Coventry*?"

" I DO promiſe, brother, to ſay every " thing in your favour that can be ſaid " with juſtice."

THIS anſwer had like to have deſtroyed his new plan; yet he ſo well commanded his paſſion as not to ſuffer it to paſs his lips, to prevent which he bit them moſt unmercifully.

RECOLLECTING himſelf for a moment, he replied, " You are very " oblig-

" obliging, *Levy :*" then ſaying he was engaged to ſpend the afternoon with Mr. *Knowles*, he quitted the room, as I ſhall for ſome time my pen.

CHAP. VIII.

FOUR months had paſſed ſince Mr. *Coventry* came to ſettle at *Weatly*, in which time nothing material happened to our hiſtory, except an overture from Sir *Francis* on account of his fair daughter : to which Mr. *Coventry* had replied, that he did him honour ; but having determined in ſo nice a point not to influence the choice of *Maria*, it muſt intirely depend on her inclinations either to accept or refuſe his offer.

AFTER

AFTER this anſwer, Sir *Francis* ſeveral times reſolved to apply himſelf to the Lady; but notwithſtanding the good opinion he had of his own perſon and deſerts, whenever he had an opportunity of ſpeaking to her, the reſerve of her manners and the dignity of her appearance awed him into ſilence.

THOUGH Miſs *Coventry* could not condeſcend to any degree of freedom with the brother, to the ſiſter ſhe was without reſerve, and every day ſerved to increaſe their friendſhip.

MISS *Coventry* had already told *Lavinia* every thought of her heart. Indeed angels might have known them, they were ſo pure, ſo like their own. Miſs *Gilford* had not been quite ſo explicit; not that hers were leſs innocent,

cent, or needed to be concealed from any other motive than the regard ſhe was now beginning to feel for her brother, whoſe change of conduct, we muſt confeſs, was carried on with inimitable management, ſince he firſt laid down his ſcheme of operations.

ONE day Miſs *Coventry* going to the *Grange* to call on *Lavinia*, ſhe was told by a ſervant his young Lady was gone to walk on the terrace. Not ſuffering her to be ſent for, ſhe tripped through the lawn, where ſhe perceived Sir *Francis* and his ſiſter in deep diſcourſe. They did not ſee her till ſhe came ſo near as to hear her own name pronounced by the former; and the ſurpriſe they both ſhewed at her appearance, confirmed the ſuſpicion ſhe began to entertain that ſhe had been

the

the ſubject of ſome debate between them.

LONG had ſhe dreaded an explanation of Sir *Francis*'s paſſion; for tho' ſhe gave him many good qualities which in reality he had no pretenſion to, yet ſhe diſliked him with an inconceivable averſion.

LAVINIA had often hinted how happy ſhe ſhould be to call her ſiſter, which ſhe would not have done without believing his diſpoſition intirely altered.

MARIA, who never felt the leaſt tendency to love, either for him or indeed any other perſon, would on theſe occaſions rally her friend; ſaying, ſhe eſtimated liberty ſo highly, that it was not

not in the power of an emperor to prevail on her to reſign it.

WHEN ſhe ſurpriſed them on the terrace, propoſing to take *Lavinia* an airing, as they had appointed the day before, it happened that Miſs *Gilford* had juſt then promiſed her brother to ſeize the next opportunity of a private moment with her friend to mention his paſſion, which he ſwore he never ſhould have courage to do himſelf.

SIR *Francis* having handed the Ladies to their chariot with the grimace of politeneſs (for with real politeneſs he was intirely unacquainted) gave his ſiſter's hand a gentle ſqueeze to remind her of her promiſe; and intending to ſee Miſs *Coventry* either at the *Grange* or *Hartly-Row* after her return, he was going to prepare his ſweet perſon for

for the interview; not in the antique cloaths of his father, but a modern ſuit of pompadour and ſilver juſt imported from *London*, with a wig, ſword, hat, &c. of the neweſt mode.

BEFORE he begun to dreſs, the arrival of Sir *William More* diſconcerted his intentions; and notwithſtanding all he had promiſed his ſiſter, he gave the baronet a reception very far from cold or diſcouraging: and as the company of his friend would prevent him from a viſit that evening to his miſtreſs, he determined to conſole himſelf by a free enjoyment of his bottle; a liberty he had for ſome time retrenched, with his other ill qualities.

WE ſhall leave this brace of worthies at a table with excellent claret before them, and go back to the Ladies.

LAVINIA had not forgot her engagement to Sir *Francis*, but found Miſs *Coventry* ſo very determined not to receive his addreſſes, that ſhe reſolved never more to mention ſo unpleaſing a ſubject.

THOUGH Miſs *Gilford* in reality did not look the leaſt grave, yet the regard *Maria* had for her made that young Lady fancy ſhe ſaw a cloud on her countenance; and taking her hand with the moſt engaging frankneſs, "Do "not, my dear Miſs *Gilford*, (ſaid ſhe) "make me unhappy in withdrawing "your friendſhip. If I refuſe your "brother, it is from the ſame motive "I ſhould do the addreſſes of all the "men I have ever yet ſeen. Perhaps "my ſentiments of love may be too "refined. How many do we every "day ſee marry with indifference, yet "live

" live what the world calls tolerably " happy!—Poſſibly they may; but I " will never make the trial: I have no " idea of what is meant by tolerable " happineſs.—Do you think, *Lavinia*, " my notions of that ſtate are too high, " when I tell you that to me it appears " a faint reſemblance of what we are " to expect in another world, either " extreme felicity, or unceaſing tor- " ment?"

" THESE ſentiments (replied Miſs " *Gilford*) I expected from you. My " brother muſt reſign himſelf to his " fate; ſuch a heart as yours he never " can merit; yet I will love you as a " ſiſter, though you refuſe to give me a " title to the name."

NOTHING could be more agreeable than this declaration to the perſon for

whom it was intended.—She returned the moſt ſincere profeſſions of eſteem, and they continued their little excurſion, delighted in the company of each other.

"MY dear, (ſaid *Lavinia*, as they "purſued the great road) about two "miles from this place is one of Na- "ture's rude beauties, but ſo ſweetly "pleaſing, that if you are inclined for "contemplation, I will convey you to "it, and you ſhall confeſs no ſpot was "ever better calculated to inſpire either "the moſt gloomy or the moſt chear- "ful ideas."

"YOU have raiſed my curioſity to "ſo high a pitch (ſaid Miſs *Coventry*), "that poſitively you muſt give me a "deſcription of this wonderful place "before we reach it."

"NOT

"NOT a word of deſcription," replied *Lavinia*; and pulling the ſtring ordered the coachman to drive immediately to *Combe-Woods*.

AGAIN Miſs *Coventry* renewed her intreaties, but to no purpoſe; *Lavinia* continued obſtinately ſilent to all her inquiries.—Striking out of the beaten road, and entering one almoſt impaſſible, they continued dragging through narrow lanes till all of a ſudden, at the end of one of them, the carriage ſtopped, a ſervant opened the door, and Miſs *Gilford* ſtepping out deſired her friend to follow.

"FOLLOW (ſaid Miſs *Coventry*)! "Where the duce, my dear, would "you lead (at the ſame time getting "out)? If you mean to ſhew me "any remarkable view, I am ſure we

" muſt climb one of theſe high elms
" to command it."

" TRUST yourſelf to my conduct
" (replied *Lavinia*), and you ſhall nei-
" ther climb or creep to attain the
" promiſed land." Then taking hold of her arm, ſhe turned ſhort upon the right; and all at once ſtartled *Maria* by introducing her to a ſmall but beautiful common, ſurrounded by natural woods, and above them hills of a thouſand variegated colours, on the ſides of which ſhe pointed out both the *Grange* and *Hartley-Row*, with many other pretty looking houſes.

OBSERVING how much *Maria* was delighted with this little ſpot, ſhe ſaid to her, " Here it is, Miſs *Coventry*,
" if you would indulge chearful ideas,
" you may do it freely. If you are
" more

" more inclined to the gloomy, I " will lead you to another retreat."

" I AM ſo pleaſed, ſo tranſported, " (returned *Maria*) with this ſweet en- " chanting place, that I ſhould be loth " to leave it, if I had not a ſtrong in- " clination to have my whole curioſity " ſatisfied; ſo lead on, I beſeech you, " to the gloomy: not that I have any " thoughts to indulge there, I'll aſſure " you."

LAVINIA ſighed.——" This place " (ſaid ſhe) is called *Combe-Woods*, and " thought ſo very curious, that it is of- " ten viſited by ſtrangers; otherwiſe " it would be perfectly unfrequented, " none of the neighbourhood ever " coming hither; the common peo- " ple having entertained a ſtrange no- " tion, that it is the habitation of ſu-

" pernatural beings; and thoſe of ſupe-
" rior rank having ſatisfied their curio-
" ſity ſeldom take the trouble of com-
" ing again."

BY this time they were entered the ſurrounding woods.

" AH! (ſaid Miſs *Coventry*) this, in-
" deed, may be called a fit place for
" melancholy reflections. Here, (con-
" tinued ſhe, ſeating herſelf on an old
" tree felled by the hand of Time)
" let us on this friendly trunk enjoy
" them. But having none of my
" own, *Lavinia*, I charge you let me
" partake of yours.—Yes, my dear,
" it is in vain to deny it; you have ſe-
" crets; painful ones too, or I am
" miſtaken. I have heard you ſigh
" often.—Certainly you do not ſigh
" without a cauſe.

" HEIGH-

" HEIGH-ho!"

" THERE it is again.—Declare im-
" mediately the happy ſwain who—"

SHE was proceeding, when Miſs *Gil-ford* interrupted her: " Cannot you in-
" ſpire me with ſome ſmall ſhare of
" your charming vivacity?"—

" NOT a tittle (ſhe returned), till
" you lighten that heart of yours, by
" giving me the huge ſecret it carries.
" —Do this, and I will engage to
" make you as blithe as a lark."

" WHAT you promiſe, is not in your
" power to perform (ſaid *Lavinia*); I
" can never more be chearful! I can
" never again be happy!"

" HEAVENS! How you ſurpriſe,
" how you terrify me! If you had
" troubles, why did you not make me

" a ſharer in them?—Indeed it was " unkind!—Indeed I ſhould not have " treated you with ſo little confidence!"

" PARDON me, *Maria*, I had rea- " ſon till now for concealment. My " brother muſt have ſuffered in your " opinion: his hopes are now at an " end, and you ſhall no longer tax " me with reſervé."

" THANK you, my dear *Lavinia*; " we have yet an hour good before " we need leave this charming place. " You have alarmed my fears for you; " in pity, then, make haſte to relieve " them. If you are unhappy, it is the " office of friendſhip to take a ſhare " in your concern."

MISS *Gilford* ſaw the impatience of *Maria*, and addreſſed her as may be found in the next chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

"ABOUT two years since I was
"unfortunate enough to be ap-
"proved of by Sir *William More*; a
"man——"

"NAY, my dear, (interrupted Miss
"*Coventry*) spare yourself the trouble
"of giving me his character: I have
"already received it from my father.
"Surely your friends could not en-
"courage a wretch of such abandoned
"morals!"

"I KNOW not what to say in their
"vindication (replied *Lavinia*); riches
"often fascinate the senses, making

" people and things appear quite dif-
" ferent from what they really are.
" Light faults in perſons of narrow
" fortune are aggravated to a ſurpriſing
" magnitude; whilſt an opulent man
" may be guilty of the greateſt enor-
" mities, and paſs them on the partial
" world for lively ſallies, frolicks, and
" many other much too gentle appel-
" lations. A king can do no wrong,
" is a ſaying I have often heard; nor,
" in ſome people's opinion, can men
" on whom Fortune has beſtowed her
" favours. This I found to be the
" caſe in reſpect to Sir *William More*.
" When I objected to his love of drink,
" All men that were not milk-ſops
" would ſometimes take a chearful
" glaſs:"——his libertine principles,
" Theſe were aſſertions of his ene-
" mies:"—his being addicted to ſwear-
" ing, ſcarce a word being unattended

" by

" by a horrid oath, " No ſign of a bad " heart; only a fooliſh habit, and " eaſily conquered."

" GOOD heavens! (exclaimed *Ma-* " *ria*) ſure Lady *Gilford* could never " argue thus."

" No, no; this converſation paſſed " with my brother, who had ever been " the ſworn friend of Sir *William*. "——I ſee reſentment riſing in your " boſom, Madam (continued ſhe); I " know you do, I know you muſt " blame me for attempting to preju- " dice you in favour of Sir *Francis*; " but had I not thought his very dif- " ferent from the principles of Sir " *William More*; had I not thought " he now utterly deſpiſed that wretch; " had I not believed him the moſt al- " tered man in the world; that he loved

" my

" my dear Miſs *Coventry* with the moſt
" ſincere and fervent paſſion, and that
" he would ſuffer in his health by
" concealing it longer; I ſhould never
" have mentioned a ſubject which I
" determined to drop, as ſoon as I ſaw
" it was diſpleaſing."

MISS *Coventry* had no longer any cloud on her countenance; ſhe gracefully aſſured *Lavinia* of her entire friendſhip, and with a ſweet ſmile begged ſhe would proceed in a recital that had already filled her with impatience.

" EIGHTEEN months have I been
" teized, my dear Miſs *Coventry*, with
" the addreſſes of Sir *William More*;
" my brother, and conſequently my
" mother, till now ſtrenuous in his fa-
" vour; notwithſtanding which I al-
" ways

" ways declared myſelf very freely,
" that I never would be his.

" ABOUT ten months ſince, being
" much preſſed by the advocates of Sir
" *William* to attend them at a ball he
" gave, and finding it impoſſible to
" get myſelf excuſed, I very reluctantly
" complied.—We entered the room,
" happily for me, before Sir *William*;
" who finding me engaged at his arri-
" val, curſed the buſineſs that had de-
" tained him, and would not dance
" the whole evening, but ſat in a cor-
" ner by himſelf, ſullen and out of hu-
" mour, except when he could engage
" me in converſation, which I took
" care ſhould be very ſeldom.

" I AM not going to deſcribe the
" gentleman with whom I danced, as
" I know myſelf incapable of doing
" him

" him juſtice; I ſhall only ſay, his " converſation had in it ſomething ſo " elegantly refined, as that very even- " ing got him a footing in my eſteem.

" NOTWITHSTANDING the com- " pany did not part till three, I never " thought any time ſo ſhort.

" ON our way home, I aſked my " brother if he knew the gentleman " who had been my parties.

" HE ſaid his name was *Gore*, and " on a viſit to Mr. *Willace*.

" HE has loſt ſome near relation, I " ſuppoſe (replied I), by his being in " ſuch cloſe mourning.

" HIS father (he returned) is lately " dead, and has left him an eſtate of

" two

" two thouſand pounds a year; but " methinks, *Levy*, you are very inqui- " ſitive: I hope you do not mean to let " him ſupplant Sir *William*."

" SUPPLANT Sir *William!* (repeated " I); ſurely, brother, you might have " ſpared the ſuppoſition. What is Sir " *William More* to me? How often " ſhall I repeat to you, that I never " will think of him in the light you " propoſe him."

" PERVERSE girl!" ſaid my mother.

" MY brother did not confine him- " ſelf, on this occaſion, even to com- " mon decency; he ſwore I ſhould " marry his friend.

" INDEED, child, you muſt (added " her Ladyſhip); you muſt, and ſhall " be Lady *More*."

"NEVER, never, Madam! whilſt "I exiſt, I will never be Sir *William*'s!"

"THE coach ſtopping prevented a "very angry anſwer; and as ſoon as "the door was opened, I ſtepped out, "and flew to my apartment, where "I ſpent the remainder of the night in "a manner not to be envied.

"I NEVER cloſed my eyes to ſleep "till ſeven; and when *Sally* came to "call me at ten, I was enjoying that "refreſhing inſenſibility.

"HAVING awakened me by un-"drawing my curtains, I aſked if "breakfaſt was ready. She told me "no; but added, "I have a letter for "you, Madam."

"I ſtarted up in my bed, I broke "the ſeal with eagerneſs, and found it

" contained two cards; one from Mr.
" *Gore*, addreſſed to me, with polite
" inquiries after my health; the other
" to my mother, from Mrs. *Willace*, to
" ſay they would be with us in the af-
" ternoon, if her Ladyſhip was diſen-
" gaged.

" I GOT up immediately, and went
" to my mother's room, which ſhe
" had juſt left, and I found her in the
" breakfaſt-parlour with Sir *Francis*.

" I GAVE the card intended for her
" Ladyſhip, but ſaid not a word of
" mine, for fear of renewing their
" ſuſpicions.

" AFTER having glanced it over,
" ſhe put it into the hands of my bro-
" ther, who returned it with his opi-
" nion, that they could not avoid ſee-
" ing

" ing them, as Sir *William* and other
" company were expected.

" IN ſhort, Madam, Mr. *Gore* came
" with them; that viſit was productive
" of a ſecond;—that ſecond of a third;
" and every time I ſaw him I was
" more and more convinced of his re-
" gard for me: we felt the warmeſt
" ſentiments of friendſhip for each
" other, and did not attempt to con-
" ceal them."

" How prettily, my dear, (ſaid *Ma-*
" *ria*, interrupting her) you ſubſtitute
" the word Friendſhip to ſupply that
" of Love: but you are certainly right;
" the latter ſhould always be founded
" on the former. Love is a miſt which
" ſeldom continues longer than the
" morning of life. If friendſhip,
" like the ſun, appears warm and
" bright

" bright to ſucceed it, we are aſſured of " a fine day: if the contrary, ſtorms, " clouds, and tempeſt, are to be ex- " pected."

" CHARMINGLY imagined! (repli- " ed *Lavinia.*) Indeed, to confeſs the " truth, my friendſhip for Mr. *Gore* " might have bore another appellation, " if I had not, like my dear Miſs *Co-* " *ventry*, taken the terms of love and " friendſhip to be almoſt ſynonymous.

" HOWEVER, give it which name " you pleaſe, the ſentiment we mu- " tually felt, was as mutually acknow- " ledged; and nothing but my mo- " ther's conſent ſeemed wanting to " complete our happineſs.

" I HAD the pleaſure to think Mr. " *Gore* enjoyed a conſiderable ſhare in " her

" her eſteem.—How, indeed, could " he avoid it? Were not her eyes, her " ears formed of the ſame materials " as thoſe of her unhappy daughter?

" AT laſt he laid open his inten- " tions, and was liſtened to with ſome " degree of condeſcenſion, his offers " of ſettlement being extremely no- " ble: however, ſhe told him, before " he could expect a definitive anſwer, " ſhe muſt conſult her ſon; and if he " would give up the intereſt of Sir " *William More*, ſhe ſhould then have " no objection to his alliance.

" BUT on conſulting my brother, " and finding him more ſtrenuous than " ever for his friend, her behaviour to " Mr. *Gore* underwent an immediate " change; and without the leaſt apo- " logy, ſhe deſired him to deſiſt from

" his

" his viſits, as Sir *Francis* had engaged
" his promiſe to Sir *William More*, and
" would by no means break it.

" HE begged, he prayed, he in-
" treated, he expoſtulated; but in vain.
" —Would my mother, he aſked,
" oblige me to marry a man to whom
" I had ſo often declared my averſion?
" —He was anſwered, That intermed-
" dlers were not looked on by her in
" an advantageous light:—That they
" had great reliance on my duty, if he
" did not attempt to ſet it aſide.

" STRUCK to the ſoul by this reply,
" he had ſcarce command enough over
" himſelf to conſider it was my mo-
" ther who treated him with ſo much
" diſrepect: however, no ſooner had
" he made this reflection, than he left
" the houſe, only ſaying, as his viſits

" were

" were so very disagreeable, he would " endeavour not to repeat them.

" ON my return from Miss *Leason*'s, " where I had spent the afternoon, I " was surprised not to find Mr. *Gore* " at the *Grange*, having appointed to " pass the evening with us: but what " did I feel, when told by my unkind " mother, and I must say cruel bro- " ther, that if ever I expected to be " looked on as the child of the one, " as the sister of the other, I must ab- " solutely promise never to see Mr. " *Gore*, or at least speak to him again, " and instantly determine to accept " the hand of Sir *William*.

" THE most explicit duty surely " could not have demanded a sacri- " fice like this: I refused to make it, " and their anger was raised to such a " height,

" that I was forced to fly to my cham-
" ber to avoid its ſevere effects.

" A LETTER from Mr. *Gore*, which
" *Sally* conveyed to me, ſerved to
" heighten the load of grief I felt.—
" How kind, how tender, how ge-
" nerouſly did he intreat that I would
" become the abſolute miſtreſs of his
" fortune, as I already was of his
" heart!—His very exiſtence, he ſaid,
" depended on the reſolution I had
" made, never to have Sir *William*.

" MY anſwer was dictated by a ſin-
" cere regard; and another letter,
" which I ſoon received, convinced me
" it was far from diſpleaſing him.

" A REGULAR correſpondence was
" now ſettled between us, *Sally* being
" our agent; for though Mr. *Gore*

" ſtill continued with his friend Mr.
" *Willace*, I was too cloſely watched
" even for a ſingle interview : and had
" it not been for the pleaſure his let-
" ters afforded me, I muſt in this ſitu-
" ation have found myſelf extremely
" miſerable, being reduced to the diſ-
" agreeable neceſſity of hearing pro-
" feſſions of love from the wretch I
" moſt on earth deſpiſed.

" SIR *William* was almoſt become
" an inmate in our family, and my
" brother fearing my averſion would
" at length tire out his paſſion, deter-
" mined with my mother's acquieſ-
" cence to oblige me to marry him, in
" ſpight of objections.

" THEY firſt tried to gain their ends
" by affectionate intreaties. If any
" method could have prevailed, it muſt

" have

" have been this: the large ſettlement
" and blaze of jewels, that next made
" an appearance on the perſuaſive liſt,
" were equally ineffectual.

" THIS obſtinacy, as my ſteady re-
" fuſal was called, provoked Sir *Fran-*
" *cis* to ſuch a height, that he ſwore I
" ſhould marry his friend before the
" next *Thurſday*, or he would not live
" in *England* another week.

" MY mother, terrified by this
" threat, and ſeeing him leave the
" room in a rage, loaded me with re-
" proaches which it pains me to recol-
" lect.

" I FELL on my knees, and with
" tears intreated ſhe would not ſacri-
" fice me to my brother's cruel ca-
" price; that ſhe would not give her

" ſanction to my being made the moſt
" miſerable of wretches.

" VERY pretty, very pretty, Ma-
" dam! replied my mother: I per-
" ceive whence all this proceeds; but
" if you will not have Sir *William*, you
" ſhall not have *Gore*; depend on that."

" No, Madam, (ſaid I, riſing from
" my ſupplicating poſture) no, it is not
" the idea of Mr. *Gore* that obſtructs
" my union with Sir *William:* before
" I knew the one, I abhorred the
" other. Reflect impartially but for
" a moment: Can the knowledge of
" ſo much worth as Mr. *Gore* poſſeſſes,
" leſſen my averſion to his deteſted
" rival?"

" FIE, fie, girl! Deteſted! Is that
" a proper word for the man who
" muſt,

" muſt, who ſhall, I am determined
" ſhall be your huſband?"

" THE hated Sir *William* coming in
" at this inſtant, deaf to his ſolicita-
" tions, and almoſt to the commands
" of my mother, I retired to my
" chamber."

CHAP. X.

"HAVING compoſed my ſpirits, "I wrote to Mr. *Gore* what had "paſſed; at the ſame time bidding "him depend on my reſolution never "to take a ſtep which would give him "reaſon to upbraid me.

"MR. *Willace*'s was not more than "a mile from the *Grange*, and *Sally* "returned in leſs than an hour:—but, "O my God! with what an account "of Mr. *Gore*'s frenzy! Indeed the "few diſtracted lines he ſent would "have ſpoke it, had ſhe been ſilent."

"CAN

"CAN you remember (aſked Miſs "*Coventry*) what they were?"

"PERFECTLY (replied *Lavinia*)."

"TALK to me not (ſaid he) of next "*Thurſday!*—Talk to me not of your "reſolution! What, my gentle *Lavi-* "*nia*, will avail your reſiſtance?— "Perhaps the deed on which I am re- "ſolved, may be wrong!—I will not, "cannot drop it. Blame me not, my "love! I muſt not loſe you!—Angels "protect and guard my deareſt *La-* "*vinia!*"

MARIA, who was kindly wiping the tears from Miſs *Gilford*'s cheek, ſoon found by the trickling drop that glided down her own, that ſhe had caught the ſoft infection.

" How my heart (ſaid ſhe) bleeds " for my diſtreſſed *Lavinia!* But my " impatience will not ſuffer me to ſay " with what tender ſympathy. Hea- " vens! proceed, pray proceed! I am " all fear, all dread! Mr. *Gore* is cer- " tainly killed by the deteſted Sir *Wil-* " *liam.*"

" No, my dear Miſs *Coventry*, I am " not ſo very, very unhappy as that " would have made me: he ſtill lives, " though for ever dead, for ever loſt " to me."

" THANK God, he lives! (cried " her friend) he cannot, ſhall not be " loſt to you! But tell me why you " accuſe him of infidelity?"

" FAR be it from me to accuſe him " of infidelity, replied *Lavinia:* hear " the

" the ſequel of my ſtory, and be your-
" ſelf the judge.

" No ſooner had I read his letter,
" than I was rendered inſenſible by the
" violent ſhock it gave me. *Sally* did
" not call any one to my aſſiſtance, but
" laid me on the bed, and with her
" endeavours to bring me to my ſenſes,
" I began to recover enough to know
" what it was that occaſioned my in-
" ſenſibility.

" IT immediately occurred to me
" that Sir *William* might be ſtill with
" my mother; and not knowing what
" I did, or paying the leaſt attention
" to *Sally*'s remonſtrances, I haſtened
" down ſtairs, my dreſs in the greateſt
" diſorder, and burſting open the door
" I entered the room with ſuch a wild-
" neſs in my air and manner, as quite

" terrified my mother: but not seeing " the person there whom I came in " pursuit of, my fears redoubled, and " I exclaimed in words scarce articu- " late,

" WHERE, O my God! where is " Sir *William?*

" HER Ladyship had the goodness, " seeing me so agitated, to take my hand, " and seating me by her, enquired into " the cause of my perturbations; but " instead of answering her question, " I repeated my own, Where, where " is Sir *William?*—How long has " he left you? Was he sent for?"

" YES, (said my mother) he was " sent for to a gentleman on particular " business."

" THEN

"THEN all is over! all is over, "Madam! Yet haſte to ſave the life "of the man you favour; and O ſave, "if poſſible, the life of him for whom "I would gladly reſign my own!"

"EXPLAIN, *Lavinia*, or how will "it be poſſible to do either?"

"HAVING given the beſt account "my fluttered ſpirits would allow, ſhe "left the room with a precipitation "equal to my wiſhes.

"AFTER her Ladyſhip had diſ- "patched half a dozen ſervants to "prevent the fate of her intended ſon- "in-law, ſhe came back, doubtleſs "with a deſign to read me a lecture "on the dreadful effects of diſobedi- "ence, and to reprimand me for car- "rying on a private correſpondence

" with Mr. *Gore*, but found a fitter " object for compaſſion than ſeverity.

" A SECOND time I was extended " on the floor, from which being re- " moved to my bed, I lay a fortnight " without the leaſt hope of reco- " very. So violent a fever ſucceeded " my fainting, that I did not ſpeak " during that time; yet I remember " my mother was very aſſiduous about " me, and more than once I ſaw her " ſhed tears.

" ONE day, as ſhe was ſitting by " my bed-ſide, I took her hand, and " faintly pronounced the name of " Mr. *Gore*.

" I KNOW, *Levy*, (replied her Lady- " ſhip) what you would ſay, and give " you my honour that Mr. *Gore* is ſafe."

" I LIFTED

"I LIFTED up my hands and eyes, "in gratitude to heaven for this in- "telligence.

"I NOW every day gathered ſtrength. "I wanted much an opportunity of "ſpeaking to *Sally*; but ſhe appeared "as ſtudious to avoid, as I did to pro- "cure it.

"HER Ladyſhip being called to a "perſon on buſineſs, I ſaid to her, "Come hither, *Sally*; why have you "not before this contrived ſome means "to tell me how Mr. *Gore* came off "in the duel he had with Sir *William*?

"DUEL! replied ſhe; a duel, "Madam! I know of none. Theſe "gentlemen have never fought."

"THANK

"THANK God! said I; then I "may still be happy. I am sure no- "thing less than Sir *William*'s resign- "ing his pretensions could have pre- "vented the event I dreaded."

"I FANCY it is not so neither, Ma- "dam; for Sir *William* is here every "day to enquire after your health: it "was not five minutes since I saw him "below."

"YOU surprise me, *Sally!*—Not "fight!—Sir *William* come still to the "house!——Have you received no "letters for me?"

"I HAVE had one, Madam, more "than a week, but could not find an "opportunity to deliver it till now."—

"MY

"My mother coming in at that in-
"ſtant, made me hide it in the bed,
"till I could find a proper time to read
"it, which, alas! came but too ſoon.

"The ſurpriſe, the aſtoniſhment,
"the grief I felt was inexpreſſible,
"when, inſtead of telling me what
"he ſuffered from my illneſs, to be
"told, and in the moſt aggravating
"terms, that I was no longer worthy
"his regard; that he had once thought
"my heart the throne of conſtancy,
"but found it was only an appearance
"of that virtue.—He bid me ſtill be
"happy, though it was not now in
"my power, nor in that of any other
"woman, to make him ſo."

"Oh the horrid ingrate! exclaim-
"ed Miſs *Coventry*; how I hate, how
"I deteſt him!"

"Let

"LET not appearances deceive you; "(replied *Lavinia*) I cannot bear that "he ſhould lie under your diſpleaſure "even for a moment. I am impa- "tient to clear him; but we muſt talk "on this ſubject in the carriage: we "do not ſeem to conſider it is ſix miles "to *Weatly*, and that the ſun has al- "moſt kiſſed the ſea."

MARIA, who could have ſat till midnight without counting hours whilſt ſhe liſtened to *Lavinia*, thus remind- ed, aroſe from her humble ſeat, when a ruſtling of the boughs made them turn round, and they ſtarted at ſeeing a man within a few yards of them.

THE mild ſweetneſs that ſhone upon his face forbade fear. Some thouſand years before, he might have been miſ- taken for the Genius of the woods.—

THE

THE ſilver beard which hung half way down his waiſt caught their attention, and *Lavinia* whiſpered *Maria* to obſerve his graceful movement, as he came towards them.

WHEN he ſpoke, they felt a veneration for him they could by no means account for.

"YOU are doubtleſs ſurpriſed, my "daughters, (ſaid he) at the ſight of a "man of ſuch uncommon appearance. "Believe me, (turning to Miſs *Gil-* "*ford*) I came not to this place to be "a liſtener: No; I came to contem- "plate my own misfortunes, and weep "afreſh at their remembrance: but "you have robbed them of their daily "tribute; your ſtory has ſtole from me "thoſe tears which were due to them."

"I AM

"I AM ſorry, Sir, (ſhe replied) tho' "inadvertently, that I ſhould have in "the leaſt diſtreſſed you; finding too, "by your words, you are not on your "own account exempt from trouble."

"INDEED I am not (returned the "pious ſtranger); but though I have "had a double portion of afflictions, "I bleſs God continually, and doubt "not the wiſdom of his deſign in ſend- "ing them.—Pardon me, Ladies, I "had a requeſt to make; particularly, "Madam, I muſt addreſs myſelf to "you," added he, ſpeaking to Miſs *Gilford.*

"IT is already granted, Sir," ſhe replied with a moſt enchanting grace.

"YOU know not, my good young "Lady, the extent of my boldneſs; "yet

"yet term it not idle curiosity, when "I tell you I wish much to hear the "sequel of that relation you have "been just giving your friend, and to "which I listened not from a bad "motive.—You say (continued he) you "can clear the seeming infidelity of "your lover."

"INDEED, Sir, I can; and if you "will meet us here to-morrow after-"noon, I will give you the sequel "you desire."

"EXCELLENT goodness! he re-"turned: I pray Heaven all your "distresses may soon have an end, and "that you may again meet and be "united to the person who has the "happiness to be esteemed by you!— "And may this other flower, this sis-"ter-sweetness, (turning to Miss *Co-*

"*ventry*,

" *ventry*, taking a hand of each) make " happy ſome man deſerving ſo much " innocence, ſo much beauty! O my " God! ſuch a one you once lent me!"

" AH, my good Sir! (ſaid *Maria*) " you afflict us greatly. See Miſs *Gil-* " *ford*'s eyes; look at mine; they " overflow to think a man ſo worthy " as you ſeem to be, ſhould labour " under the oppreſſion of ſorrow. Do " not deny me a boon I am about to " aſk; if you ſhould, it would almoſt " break my heart."

" SPEAK, my child (ſaid the vene- " rable ſtranger); if within my power " to oblige you, ſuch ſweetneſs ſhall " not aſk in vain."

" I AM going, Sir, (replied ſhe with " an enchanting ſmile) to be very in-

" quiſitive.

" quiſitive. In the firſt place, will you
" condeſcend to inform us to what na-
" tion you belong? for I imagine you
" are not a native of this kingdom."

HE ſmiled at her ſurmiſe.—" I have
" never (returned he) ſeen any other
" kingdom; but I can eaſily account,
" Madam, for your miſtake. My
" uncommon habit, and this length
" of hair (pointing to his chin) muſt
" make me appear extremely ſtrange
" to people who are converſant with
" the world: but as I am not obliged
" to ſtudy its faſhions, my only care is
" to provide the abſolute neceſſaries of
" life. You will ſcarce credit me (con-
" tinued he) when I tell you, that, ex-
" cept yourſelves and three other per-
" ſons, I have not ſeen a human face
" theſe five years."

" WHERE,

"WHERE, ſaid *Lavinia*; Where, "ſaid *Maria*; can you have been all "this time ſequeſtered?"

"BEFORE I diſcover that, (he re-"plied) you muſt give me a ſolemn "promiſe never to diſcloſe it without "my permiſſion. On theſe condi-"tions, to-morrow, when you return, "I will lead you to my retreat."

"WE ſubſcribe to them with plea-"ſure," ſaid they: "Though (added "Miſs *Coventry*) I now perceive the "boon I intended to aſk muſt be given "up. I was going (purſued ſhe) to "petition you would go with us to my "father's. He is a good man; he re-"veres good men: how would he be "delighted with your company! If you "ſhould then weep, his tears would "fall with yours: he has loſt a wife,

"I a

" I a mother, for whom they will ever
" flow."

" YOUR father has loſt a wife, you
" ſay, my good young Lady: I too
" have loſt one, the pattern of every
" virtue, every excellence. Perhaps ſo
" was his; but has he loſt children,
" friends, fortune, all that in this life
" is deſirable? O no! he has not;
" you are his daughter. What a bleſ-
" ſing, what a treaſure has he ſtill
" left! How unfit for companions!
" Whenever we ſat down to enumerate
" our misfortnnes, his tale of woe
" would ſoon be told, whilſt mine
" would laſt from morn to eve, from
" eve to morn, a ſummer's day."

THE compaſſionate tear quivered in the bright eyes of *Lavinia* and *Maria:* they longed to know what thoſe miſ-

misfortunes were, and why he had baniſhed himſelf from mankind; but were forced to ſuſpend their curioſity, as the night made ſuch ſwift approaches.

AFTER renewing their promiſe of ſecrecy, alſo of meeting early the following day, they parted; the Ladies regained their carriage, whilſt the ſtranger ſtruck into the thickeſt part of the woods.

IT is impoſſible to ſay how much they wiſhed for the next afternoon: they thought nor talked of any thing but their late adventure, till arrived within a mile of *Weatly*, when it was baniſhed the breaſt of *Lavinia* by the ſight of Sir *William More*, ſeated in his Phaeton, but indebted to a ſervant from undergoing the ſame fate with that

that presumptuous youth whose name his carriage bore; the Baronet's head being nearly as giddy with claret, as the offspring of *Apollo* was with ambition.

PASSING the chariot where sat his mistress, he attempted to speak; but it was only an attempt.

"HEAVENS! (said Miss *Coventry*) "what a beast is that which has just "passed us! Lord help me! Why, my "dear Miss *Gilford*, do you change "colour?"

"AH Madam! (replied *Lavinia*) "that is the detested Sir *William*, re- "turned to make me miserable. All "my reliance now is on Sir *Francis*, "who has assured me he will no more "interest himself in his favour."

"WELL then, my dear, why are "you apprehenſive?"

"I CERTAINLY ought not to alarm "myſelf (returned Miſs *Gilford)*; but "in his very appearance there is a "ſomething to me ſtrangely terrify-"ing."

THE remainder of their journey ſhe ſeemed ſo much fluttered, and ſo very uneaſy, that Miſs *Coventry*, who thought it poſſible ſhe might meet Sir *William* if ſhe returned to the *Grange*, obliged her to paſs the night at *Hartly-Row*, after ſending an excuſe to Lady *Gilford* by the ſervant who attended them, informing her Ladyſhip *Lavinia* would ſpend the next day with Miſs *Coventry*.

WHEN

WHEN the chariot ſtopped at the door, doctor *Edgcome* preſented his hand, and helped the Ladies to alight.

I OUGHT to aſk my readers pardon for not introducing this worthy gentleman to them ſince the death of Mrs. *Coventry*, eſpecially as he had been a great aſſiſtant to his patron in forming the mind of his amiable daughter. The love he bore that young Lady was little inferior to what might be felt by a parent: this he ſhewed in refuſing a valuable living, which, had he accepted, muſt have divided him from the deareſt of his friends.

DOCTOR *Edgcome*'s converſation ſoftened many uneaſy reflections in the breaſt of Mr. *Coventry*, his diſpoſition being extremely chearful; which

chearfulneſs he derived from an approving heart. His glaſs had few remaining ſands to run: already he attained an honourable old age, yet hitherto ſuch a favourite of Providence, that he had not groaned under any of its pains and inconveniences.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

MR. *Coventry*, as his daughter did not return till the clock had ſtruck nine, began to be alarmed, fearing ſome accident; but when ſhe entered the room, and flew into his parental arms, expanded to receive her, every uneaſy ſenſation vaniſhed.

"Is this the way (ſaid doctor *Edgcome*, ſmiling) that you puniſh our "runaway? Your daughter would be "ſpoiled, was it not for me."

"INDEED, Sir, (cried *Maria*) you "really frightened me; but I ſhould

" have known, if my dear Papa had
" been diſpleaſed with his girl, you
" would not have told me ſo with that
" ſerenity of countenance."

" LOVE you! (interrupted the face-
" tious old gentleman) Really, my
" friend, (turning to Mr. *Coventry*) I
" was in hopes we might have paſſed
" ſome years longer together; but that
" will be now impoſſible; for after a
" young fellow like me is diſcovered
" to be a lover, the world will talk,
" whilſt he continues in the ſame houſe
" with the object of his paſſion."

" UPON my honour, (ſaid Mr. *Co-*
" *ventry*) as you ſtate the matter, Doc-
" tor, I know not how to adviſe. Miſs
" *Gilford*, what is your opinion?"

" WHY,

"WHY really, Sir, ſince I muſt "ſpeak, though I ſhould be ſorry to "fill you with ſuſpicions, I believe if "the doctor leaves you, there is ſome "danger of *Lavinia*'s eloping with "him; for by what I have obſerved, "their paſſion ſeems to be mutual."

"MISS *Gilford* ſays true, Sir (re-"plied *Maria* laughing). You had bet-"ter, my dear Papa, conſider on this "matter, or a trip to *Scotland* may be "the conſequence; for though the "good doctor is of age, yet as I am "hardly eighteen, I cannot diſpoſe of "myſelf without your conſent."

NEVER was an evening more agreeably paſſed, or a company more delighted with each other. Mr. *Coventry*'s ſpirits, though never in the higheſt key, may be called ſweetly in tune;

not unlike that kind of harmony, which gently vibrates on the ear, and never fails to lull the mind into a pleasing calm, without raising those lively ideas which are inspired by more sprightly notes.

THE doctor was proposing a party at whist, when a servant entered with a letter, which just then came from the Office.

"LORD *L*——!" said Mr. *Coventry*, looking at the superscription.

THE doctor, who had laid aside his pipe to engage at cards, now relighted it, and the Ladies in a low voice were talking of their next day's excursion, when Mr. *Coventry* having perused the letter gave it to his daughter, saying, "Lord *L*——, my dear, has given us a new relatio n."

"NOT a wife, I hope," cried doctor *Edgcome*, throwing down his pipe; and being anſwered in the affirmative, "If that is the caſe, (continued he) "even I cannot be ſafe; for ſince that "knave *Cupid* has with his feathers "tickled the heart of a batchelor of "fifty-five, may not fourſcore be in "equal danger?—I proteſt, my little "cherub, (to *Maria*) this piece of "news has amazingly diſcompoſed me! "Well, I believe I muſt run from you "at laſt."

"SUPPOSING I tell you, friend, (ſaid "Mr. *Coventry*, ſmiling at his humour) "that Lord *L*—— never intended to "live a batchelor, and has been long "enaged to the Lady he now married, "their union only delayed from family "reaſons."

"I AM ſatisfied, (he replied) and "now will venture to aſk what kind "of woman he has made choice of."

"ONE (returned Mr. *Coventry*) "every way calculated to make him "happy.—What think you of the ami- "able Lady *Mary Haſtings?*"

"I AM not acquainted with her "Ladyſhip (anſwered the doctor); but "common Fame, I know, has been "very loud in her praiſes."

"COMMON Fame (ſaid Mr. *Coven-* "*try*) is called a common Liar: but "you ſhall be a judge if ſhe has not "told truth in regard to Lady *Mary*. "I expect her Ladyſhip with her Lord "next week: their coming will make "me vaſtly happy, as my dear child "confines herſelf too much with me."

"O SAY

"O SAY not this," cried the amiable *Maria*, who had juſt then finiſhed reading the letter: "Was I to devote "every hour, nay every minute of "my life, would it be too much for "ſuch a father?"

"MY deareſt child, (ſaid the en-"raptured parent, hugging her to his "breaſt) ſuch duty and goodneſs were "certainly ſent to compenſate for the "loſs of thy bleſſed mother."

DOCTOR *Edgcome* not approving the turn this converſation ſeemed likely to take, prudently gave it another, by aſking if Lord and Lady *L*— brought any company with them.

MR. *Coventry* replied, that Mr. *Stormont* and Miſs *Haſtings* were propoſed of the party; the former a ward of

his Lordſhip, the latter related to his Lady.

"MR. *Stormont!* (ſaid the doctor) "I fancy I was acquainted with his "father. Can you tell me if his fa- "mily are of *Worceſter?*"

BEING anſwered affirmatively, "I "know nothing (purſued he) of this "young branch, but will aver the old "ſtock is as good and honeſt as any in "the kingdom. Nay, let me tell my "Primroſe and Daffodil, they muſt "keep a ſtrict guard at the door of "their hearts: ſhould he be half ſo "handſome as his father, they will "elſe play them a runaway trick."

BOTH Ladies promiſing to take his advice, the converſation continued chearful and entertaining till that hour arrived

arrived at which they retired for the night.

MISS *Coventry* and *Lavinia* being now at liberty to chat with freedom, began to talk over the occurrences of the paſſed day, and again wiſhed for the hour which was to carry them to the Woods.

HERE I will ſuppoſe my reader, eſpecially if a female, not to be ſo void of curioſity as to regret my paſſing over the neceſſary orders given by Miſs *Coventry* for the reception of her noble relations; a morning-viſit from Miſs *Jones*'s, or their thouſand profeſſions of friendſhip to *Maria*; in order to bring that Lady and Miſs *Gilford* once more to the place of rendezvous.

BEING

BEING arrived at the narrow lane, Miſs *Coventry* ordered the ſervants to wait, as they had done the preceding day; and entering the woods found there the venerable Sage, leaning on a ſtaff, and ſo deeply buried in contemplation, that he never lifted his eyes from the ground, or knew any thing of their approach, till they ſpoke, which rouſed him from his reverie.

AFTER anſwering their inquiries for his health, he ſaid they were very punctual to their appointment.

"WE would not have made you "wait, Sir, (replied *Lavinia*) for the "univerſe; but we are not to ſtay "here: you laſt night was ſo good to "ſay, you would conduct us to your "houſe."

"To

"To my houſe! (he repeated) Yes, "ſo I will; but you muſt not expect, "my children, the edifice noble, rooms "lofty, or fretted roofs: yet he who "built it can, at his own pleaſure, "make even the meaneſt cot more deſi- "rable than the moſt ſplendid palace."

HAVING ſaid this, he led them through ſeveral intricate paths, and at length ſtruck into one ſo extremely narrow, as made it difficult to paſs, the end of which they did not gain for many minutes, and were then unutterably ſurpriſed to find it terminate in a rock: nor could they perceive any way by which to proceed. They looked on each other, and for the firſt time began to entertain thoughts not in favour of their conductor, which were ſtrengthened by his obſerving a ſtrict ſilence.

WHAT

WHAT would they have now given to have been at *Weatly!* blaming themſelves, no doubt, for having raſhly ventured to ſo retired a place with a perſon they had never ſeen but once before. His venerable aſpect, that goodneſs which they imagined ſo conſpicuous in every look and word, ſhould not, ought not, to have been ſo much relied on:—Appearances often deceive:—How eaſy for a villain to put on the maſk of virtue!

UNABLE to communicate their dreadful apprehenſions to each other, they were ſinking with fear, when the perſon who raiſed it taking a key from his pocket, applied it to the rock, which opened, as if by enchantment, ſufficient for two to enter. "O my God!" (cried *Maria* in a low voice) what "is to become of us!"

"LET

"LET us rely on Heaven," whiſpered Miſs *Gilford*. She could add no more: the ſtranger offered her his hand, ſaying he would return in an inſtant and fetch her friend.

LAVINIA knew that reſiſtance could be of no ſervice: they were now too much in his power, and even to ſhew a diſtruſt would be impolitic; for which reaſon ſhe ſuffered him to lead her, though with trembling ſteps.

Miss *Coventry* ſaw her enter the dreadful cavern! What at that moment was her emotion! Affrighted, terrified, ſhe looked on every ſide to ſee if there was no way to eſcape; but none appeared, except the little path by which they came; the wood being ſo thick on either hand, that it was abſolutely impoſſible to penetrate it. She had

had once thoughts of trying the ſwiftneſs of her feet, nay, had actually retracted ſome ſteps, when the voice of Friendſhip bid her return. "Could "ſhe leave (it aſked) in that ſhocking "place her dear *Lavinia?*" This ſingle queſtion determined her; ſhe came back, reſolved to ſhare the ſame fate with her friend, and offered up a fervent prayer to the Almighty for his protection. The petition came from a heart too pure to be rejected. Whilſt her lovely eyes were looking to that heaven from whence ſhe expected ſuccour, half her fears vaniſhed; and when the old gentleman again approached her, ſhe did not feel thoſe perturbations ſhe had done a few minutes ſince.

"COME, my child, (ſaid he, with "ineffable benignity) condeſcend to "enter

" enter my humble cell. This is my
" houſe. I bad you not expect a lofty
" dome. The head of Ambition has
" never yet entered my dwelling. Be-
" lieve me, Madam, the parade and
" buſtle we muſt neceſſarily meet in
" the world, though ever ſo fortunate,
" cannot compenſate for the tranquil
" eaſe I here enjoy."

MISS *Coventry*, who had now loſt ſight of every fear, liſtened whilſt he ſpoke with reverential pleaſure; and by his aſſiſtance reached the laſt of about twenty ſteps, that were either worn by Time, or hewn by Art, to an eaſy declivity, which led to a ſmall neat room, whoſe craggy ſides were covered with the bark of trees, floored with the ſame materials.

A COUCH,

A COUCH, three chairs, a little table and a book-case, compleated the furniture.

HERE the Ladies were again re-united; they gazed on each other with aſtoniſhment; they appeared to wonder; but their ſurpriſe was unattended by ſuſpicion.

As ſoon as the Hermit had ſeated his fair gueſts, he preſented them with cake and ſweet-meats; nor was a glaſs of excellent Madeira, which he inſiſted on their drinking, at all unſeaſonable, having lately ſuffered ſo much from their timidity: but with all their engaging rhetoric, they could not prevail on their abſtemious hoſt to taſte the wine.

"I WOULD

"I WOULD oblige you, (ſaid he) "was it in my power; but that is an "indulgence I never allow myſelf, un- "leſs my health or ſpirits abſolutely "require it, which is not now the "caſe: on the contrary, my heart feels "a lightneſs to which it has been long "unaccuſtomed."

"PARDON me, my dear young "Lady, (to *Lavinia*) I find myſelf "ſtrangely impatient for the ſequel of "your pretty narrative. I intreat you "will remove the cloud which ſeems "to hang over the conduct of your "lover. Methinks I am intereſted in "his favour. To me he appears de- "ſerving. He muſt not, cannot be "unamiable."

MISS *Gilford*'s eyes ſparkled the approbation of her ſoul, at the praiſes given

given Mr. *Gore* by this good old man; and without waiting to be ſolicited a ſecond time, ſhe began to ſatisfy his curioſity in the following manner.

CHAP. XII.

"I LEFT off yeſterday at my receiving a letter from Mr. *Gore* by the "hands of *Sally*; the contents ſo unexpected, and I then thought ſo extremely cruel, thatI will not attempt "to tell you what I felt on this occaſion. I ſuppreſſed my tears before my mother and brother: but "when alone, they were my only conſolation.

"I OFTEN

"I OFTEN aſked *Sally* if ſhe had "heard nothing of Mr. *Gore*; which "ſhe was ſure to anſwer in the nega- "tive. Indeed, I have ſince wondered "at my blindneſs: the leaſt penetra- "tion might have diſcovered that ſhe "was now more in Sir *William*'s in- "tereſt than in mine: but my eyes "were not open to her baſeneſs, till "her own conſcience could no longer "keep the horrid ſecret.

"ONE evening my ſpirits being ex- "tremely low, I went to my room "as ſoon as the cloth was removed; "and taking up a volume of *Shake- "ſpear*, I opened it to his excellent "play intitled *Much Ado about No- "thing*.

"HERO's diſtreſs affected me: I "wept as I read it.—*Sally*, who I had "em-

" employed about ſome work of which " I was grown tired, begged I would " put down my book: " I am ſure, " Madam, (ſaid ſhe) it muſt be a miſe- " rable melancholy one to make you " cry ſo. I could never in my born " days endure to read ſtories of ghoſts " and murders; they ſo befrighten " me, that for all the good in the " world I ſhould ſee them when I go " to bed."

" SMILING at her ignorant ſimpli- " city, I replied, " It is neither one " or the other, *Sally*; yet it affects " me more than if I had read a relation " of all the ghoſts that have appeared " the laſt hundred years."

" LORD, Madam! (ſaid ſhe) if it " would not be making too bold, I " ſhould ſurely aſk what it was about."

" THINK-

" THINKING no more than juſt to
" amuſe myſelf with the remarks of
" ſuch a perſon, I began to relate the
" heads of what I had been reading,
" to which I obſerved ſhe liſtened
" with great attention, and really
" made ſome judicious remarks on
" the whimſical characters of *Benedict*
" and *Beatrice:* but when I came to
" that part where *Margaret* is pitched
" on by Don *John* to repreſent *Hero*
" to the deceived *Claudio*, a death-
" like paleneſs overſpread her face,
" the work dropped from her hand,
" and ſhe cried out with eyes ſtaring
" as if ſhe had really ſeen a ſpectre,
" I am guilty! You have diſcovered
" me, Madam! I cannot hope for
" your forgiveneſs!" and down ſhe
" fell on her knees before me.

" WHAT is the matter! (exclaim-
" ed I) what ails the girl?" though in-
" deed I was ſcarce ever more terrified.

" THE matter, Miſs *Lavinia!* (ſaid
" the conſcious wretch, ſobbing) To
" be ſure you know it already, or could
" never have told my wicked plot to
" deceive Mr. *Gore.* Aye, aye, Ma-
" dam, I knew who you meant by
" *Margaret.*"

" GOOD God! I ſhuddered with hor-
" ror and amazement; but perceiving
" I muſt owe her confeſſion to a ſup-
" poſition that I was before acquainted
" with her crimes, I bad her in a ſtern
" voice get up, and if ſhe hoped for
" my pardon to tell me every particular
" of her buſineſs, and who it was that
" made her commit ſo black a tranſ-
" action.

" AH!

"AH! what a ſcene of iniquity "had ſhe to diſcloſe! I ſhall faulter "in a repetition."

"PROCEED, my dear child," ſaid the Sage. An aſſenting nod prevented the ſame requeſt from Miſs *Coventry*.

"I WAS obliged (continued *Lavi-*"*nia)* to repeat my commands ſeveral "times before I could get her from "her knees: ſhe then trembled ſo as "to be forced to ſupport herſelf a-"gainſt the back of a chair.

"I AM ignorant, Madam, (ſaid the "agitated creature) who can have be-"trayed me to you; but this I am ſure, "I have never had my right mind ſince "Sir *William More* overcame my "honeſty."

"WHAT! (cried I, not miſunder-
"ſtanding her words, but as it ſeems
"miſapplying them) poor wretch!
"haſt thou then fallen a victim to that
"vileſt of men! O *Sally*, *Sally!* and
"Sir *William More* has really ſeduced
"thee! This I did not know before."

"GOD be thanked! God be thank-
"ed! (replied ſhe ſobbing) I ben't
"what I believe you take me to be,
"Madam. No, no, I have preſerved
"my *vartue*; though I did, I did, I
"did, to be ſure, loſe my name, when
"I conſented to betray and ruin ſo
"ſweet a young Lady."

"A MINUTE ſince I trembled for
"the poor wretch: now every fear re-
"doubled on my own account.

"SPEAK,

" SPEAK, (cried I) explain yourſelf; " but firſt reach me ſome water." She " tottered to the ſtand, and bringing " me the bottle, I ſwallowed a mouth- " full, which probably kept me from " fainting. " Now (ſaid I) go on, " conceal nothing from me, and per- " haps I may forgive you."

" I COULD not prevent her from " again falling on her knees, to bleſs " me for what I had half promiſed; " and I really believe ſhe was a very " ſincere penitent.

" SEEING my impatience, and be- " ing often ordered to riſe, ſhe reſumed " her place at the back of my chair, " and proceeded thus:

" YOU may remember, Madam, " that the laſt afternoon you ever ſent

" me to Mr. *Willace*'s, I brought back " a letter from Mr. *Gore*, which made " you very ill; and I thought then, if ſo " be as how I ſhould have the whole " *univarſe* to do you harm, I would " not have earned it: but alackaday! " I verily believe *James* muſt have " given love-powder to bewitch me, " or I ſhould never have turned about " to be of another mind. To be ſure, " Madam, I had a little kindneſs for " Mr. *James*; but never thought as " how he had any for me, becauſe he " was very often kiſſing *Suſan* the " dairy-maid, and ſhe made her brags " all about that he was her ſweet- " heart."

" PRITHEE, girl, (ſaid I) teize me " no longer with affairs of which I " want not to be informed."

" MY

"MY dear Lady, pray ſuffer me to "ſpeak for myſelf (replied ſhe), or "you will mayhap think me more "*baſer* than I am."

"I FOUND ſhe would go on in her "own way, ſo I bid her proceed.

"The night you was taken ill, "Mr. *James*, after I had put my "Lady to bed, brought me a letter: "at the ſame time he told me as how, "Don't be a fool, my dear *Sally*; I "love you better than any earthly crea-"ture: but we can never marry 'till "we have got a little money before-"hand; therefore you muſt do as his "Honour deſires."

"To be ſure I was glad to hear him "ſpeak ſo kindly; but before I could "aſk him if he meant me true, he

" was gone out of the room; and, " God be thanked! being brought " pretty well to my pen, I opened the " letter he left, and was quite bewil- " dered to find it come from ſo great a " gentleman as Sir *William*.

" I READ it over and over, and at " laſt underſtood that if I would ſet " out and come to him directly, he " would make it worth my while. " So when I came to this part, I ſaid " to myſelf, I would not go on any " conſideration, as his Honour could " not want me for good: but reading " and reading on, I found he did not " intend me any hurt, becauſe he ſaid " as how he knew Mr. *James* was my " ſweet-heart, and had deſired him to " come along with me, becauſe I " ſhould not have any doubts about " my *vartue*."

" So

"So you went (said I) at this sum-
"mons, did you, *Sally?*"

"INDEED, indeed, I resolved not
"to go, Madam; *for why*, I knew
"you thought his Honour a very bad
"man: but Mr. *James* coming just
"then was very angry, and said as
"how if that was the case, and I
"would not go, he would give my
"Lady warning the next day.

"WHAT could I do, Madam?—
"What could I do? (said the weeping
"criminal) If *James* had gone away,
"I should never have had a minute's
"heart's ease afterwards: so I did—I
"did—I did tell him, that if so be
"as how he would not give warning,
"I would go."

"WELL, and you did go?"

"YES, Madam, I cannot ſay but I "did."

"LORD help me! (ſaid I) but "proceed; and again I charge you, "hide nothing from me.

"I HELD by *James* all the way. "As you chuſe, Madam, to have me "particular, upon my word, and in- "deed, I will be very particular. "Yet though Mr. *James* was with me, "and I held by his arm, I ſhook "all over with fear; and every now "and then fancied I ſaw *ghoſtes's*, tho' "I ſuppoſe there is no ſuch things in "theſe parts. And though it is but "a ſhort mile to Sir *William*'s houſe, I "thought as how the road grew longer "and longer, and was ready to die "when *James* let me in through the "great gate."

"HIS

" His Honour was ſitting at a ta-
" ble ſpread all over with golden gui-
" neas.

" Though I was but a ſervant he
" got up, and was ſo good-humoured
" as to kiſs me, and ſhook my ſweet-
" heart by the hand, ſaying, whilſt
" we bowed and curtſied, " I am glad
" to ſee you, Mr. *James*, eſpecially
" as you have brought your pretty
" *Sally* with you;" and his Honour
" ſwore we were a comely couple,
" and then was ſo kind to ſay he would
" ſtand up for our firſt boy.

" I wish, (ſaid *James*, whilſt I to
" be ſure, Madam, was quite daunted,
" and bluſhed like any thing) I wiſh
" it was come to that: but your Wor-
" ſhip muſt know I am but a poor
" man, and *ſarvice* is no inheritance:

" and tho' I love *Sally* as my life, yet " before we marry, I am afraid I " ſhall be forced to accept of the offer " Squire *Jones* made me yeſterday."

" WHAT was that?" aſked his Honour.

" IT was (ſaid *James*) to go to *An-* " *tigua* for ten years, for which I am " to have five hundred pounds."

" O MY dear injured Lady! (con- " tinued the poor creature) I thought " thoſe dreadful words would have " been my death: indeed, I could not " help crying, though I hid it with " my apron, which Sir *William* took " from my face, and ſaid, " Indeed, " *James*, you are to blame to let ſuch " pretty eyes weep for you."

" JAMES

" JAMES wiped his eyes too, and " ſaid he wiſhed as how he could help " it.

" COME, come, (cried his Honour) " let us try, Mrs. *Sally*, if you and I " can prevent honeſt *James* from go- " ing over ſea. Now tell me, child, " what would you do to keep him at " home; and, what is more, marry " and live comfortably with him?"

" I SAID, I ſaid, I cannot deny it, " Madam, I ſaid I would do any thing " in my power; for I thought as how " I already ſaw him on the cruel " ocean.

" WELL, then, it is in your power " to keep him always with you (ſaid " his Honour, taking one of my hands, " whilſt *James* held the other); and " this

" this gold (pointing to the table) is all
" your own, my girl, if you will aſſiſt
" me in a good turn."

" OH heaven! (cried I) Take care,
" take care, *Sally*, that you repeat
" every word this vile Sir *William* ſaid,
" when he told the black affair you
" was to execute."

" ALL this time the creature wept
" very plentifully, and wiping her
" eyes told me, ſhe had not forgot a
" word his Honour had ſaid, and would
" tell me juſt as he ſpoke them.

" SALLY, (ſaid he) you know I am
" very ſoon to marry your young Lady:
" you know too that *Gore* pretends to
" diſpute her heart with me. Now by
" ſome means or other he has diſco-
" vered that *Thurſday* is fixed upon by
" Lady

"Lady *Gilford* and Sir *Francis* for my "nuptials with *Lavinia*, and this af- "ternoon he ſent for me. "Kill," or "be killed," was the word. Having "no inclination to either, I would have "argued the caſe; but as nothing "would content the fellow, I was "forced to forge an inſtant falſhood. "I ſaid, Miſs *Gilford* was not worth "our ſwords or reſentment, and that "laſt evening I diſcovered her perfidy; "that ſhe had another lover, and ac- "tually met him every night at a little "window which looked into the "grove."

"O GOOD your Honour! (ſaid I) "how could you ſay ſuch a thing? "Sure my Lady never met a Chriſtian "man in that place in her born days."

"I KNOW

"I KNOW it, *Sally* (replied he); "but this is not now the matter. Tho' "it was a long while before *Gore* would "give the leaſt credit to my tale, he "now begins to believe it; for I have "abſolutely promiſed, that to-morrow-"night at eleven, the time I told him "when I was informed they generally "met, his eyes, his ears, ſhould con-"vince him how little worthy ſhe was "of his or my regard. Now it re-"mains on you, *Sally*, to help me to "fulfil this engagement. At the time "and place appointed do you be there, "dreſſed in your Lady's crimſon hat "and cloak: lean out at the window; "*James* ſhall be under; but ſpeak "low, that your voice may not be diſ-"covered. He will ſay to you, "My "deareſt Miſs *Gilford*, why am I not "in a rank of life to appear openly

"your

" your lover?"—Then anſwer him, " that you would prefer him to a " prince, even if he was ten times " meaner than he is. Say, that you " pretend a paſſion for *Gore* only to " hide your love to him; and ſay alſo, " you hate, you deſpiſe me. Call me " a villain, or any other bad name; " but be ſure, *Sally*, you do not for- " get to ſpeak all this extremely ſoft."

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

HERE *Lavinia* was interrupted by a voice which exclaimed, "Vile! inexorable! plotting villain!" At the ſame time a man of about five-and-twenty appeared before them, and flung himſelf at the feet of Miſs *Gilford*, who, as ſoon as ſhe heard, or rather ſaw him, gave a violent ſcream, and fell to the ground.

MARIA, though terrified almoſt to a degree of frenzy, flew to ſupport her fallen lifeleſs friend: but ſhe was already in the arms of him who had occaſioned this diſorder. He wept over her; he intreated, as if ſhe ſtill heard him,

him, that ſhe would live; that ſhe would forgive his weak credulity.—Theſe and ſome other words to the ſame effect convinced Miſs *Coventry*, the perſon whom ſhe now ſaw was the identical Mr. *Gore*.

His eyes expreſſed generoſity, ſenſibility, tenderneſs: the laſt all ſhowered on *Lavinia*, who was by this time laid upon the couch, and ſo much recovered as to be able to bleſs her tranſported lover with ſo ſweet a look, as would have repayed him for ten years of anguiſh.

As for the old gentleman, he rubbed his hands, ſtroked his beard, and once more produced that ſame bottle of Madeira which made its appearance in a former chapter.

"COME,

"COME, my children, (ſaid the "good man) after the fright my ne- "phew has occaſioned you, another "glaſs will be abſolutely neceſſary."

"YOUR nephew! Mr. *Gore* your "nephew! (repeated *Lavinia*) Hea- "ven and earth! what new wonders! "Certainly (cried Miſs *Coventry*) we "are tranſported into Fairy land: every "thing we hear and ſee is ſtrange and "ſurpriſing."

"INDEED, my dear Miſs *Gilford*, "(ſaid Mr. *Gore*) this venerable, this "good man is my uncle. It is to him "I am indebted for every ſentiment "deſerving approbation. It is by his "advice that I have been with-held "from many actions which would "have given me pain, when I came to "reflect on them; yet there is one

"debt

" debt greater than the reſt, which I " mention laſt: It is to him I owe my " preſent happineſs. Had it not been for " him, I ſhould ſtill have thought you " falſe, blinded by the *Machiavelian* " art of a curſed contriver; but Sir " *William More* ſtill lives."

" AND ſtill ſhall live, if his God " permit (interrupted the uncle of " Mr. *Gore*): but we will talk on this " topick ſome other time.—You broke " in upon us, young gentleman, at a " very intereſting part of Miſs *Gilford*'s " narrative, nor will I pardon you, " unleſs you prevail on her to proceed."

" I FEAR, Sir, (ſaid Mr. *Gore*) her " ſpirits are too much weakened by " the late ſhock they have ſuſtained; " but with Miſs *Gilford*'s permiſſion, " though it will be greatly to your diſ-

" advan-

" advantage, I will ſatisfy you as far " as is in my power. This propoſal " met a general approbation ; *Lavinia* " in particular ſeemed highly pleaſed.

" IT has already appeared but too " plain (ſaid he) that *Sally* could not " withſtand the united powers of love " and affluence; it is certain ſhe did " not by what followed; for at the fixed " time Sir *William* called on me, and " we went to the place appointed, " where I thought I ſaw the beſt, the " moſt deſerving of her ſex changed " into a falſe, perfidious ingrate. I " heard the very words which *Sally* re- " peated to her Lady; I ſaw the wretch " lean forward to her accomplice ; and " my tranſports of rage were ſo un- " governable, that I would have fal- " len inſtantly on my ſuppoſed rival, if " his vile employer, who I now regard-

" ed

" ed as my beſt friend, had not with-
" held me.

" WHAT can I ſay in defence of
" my ſtupidity? only that I was blind-
" ed by infatuation, and that the glim-
" mering light from a moon in its de-
" cline helped to deceive me.

" AFTER ſuppoſing myſelf con-
" vinced of your perfidy, I was impa-
" tient to leave the hated ſpot; Let us
" (ſaid I) let us go from this falſe, this
" fickle woman, whom I now deſpiſe."

" SIR *William* ſaid every thing he
" could deviſe to heighten my jealouſy,
" if that had been poſſible.

" WE returned together to Mr.
" *Willace*, who was ſhocked at the al-
" teration a few hours had made in
" me.—

" me.—He begged to know the cauſe.
" I refuſed to ſatisfy him, ſtill anxious
" for the reputation of one I had once
" ſo truly, ſo ardently loved; whom
" yet I could not avoid loving. I even
" made Sir *William*, who had ſolemn-
" ly aſſured me he would never ad-
" dreſs Miſs *Gilford*, as ſolemnly pro-
" miſe to keep her folly a ſecret.

" UNABLE to ſtay at *Weatly*, where
" I was every day ſubject to ſee my
" ſtill dear, and as I thought falſe, *La-*
" *vinia*, I took my leave of Mr. *Wil-*
" *lace*, firſt ſending a note not to up-
" braid Miſs *Gilford*, but to let her
" know I was no ſtranger to her infi-
" delity.

" ON my going from *Weatly*, I had
" ſome thoughts of proceeding to *Lon-*
" *don*; but changed them in favour of
" my

" my own houſe, about three miles
" from this place, which I preferred
" for the ſatisfaction of ſeeing and re-
" ceiving advice and conſolation from
" the beſt of men.

" NOTWITHSTANDING my uncle
" did and ſaid every thing to make me
" conquer a paſſion which appeared to
" be ſo ill placed, yet he found it a taſk
" not to be accompliſhed: your idea
" followed me every where.

" IT is impoſſible to ſay what I felt
" when my uncle this morning related
" to me his interview with you the
" preceding evening; but how were
" my tranſports encreaſed, upon being
" told I ſhould ſee you in a few hours.
" My revered director thought I had
" beſt conceal myſelf, where I could
" hear the remainder of your ſtory. I

" mitted; you came; I saw you enter,
" and felt emotions such as cannot be
" described.

" OH! I could for ever have listened
" to the music of your voice, had you
" not fixed my whole attention on the
" villainy of that detested wretch, who
" had poisoned my soul with suspi-
" cion. You shewed me what a fool,
" what a dupe, I had been. I could
" not suppress a sudden gust of passion.
" My abrupt appearance was the con-
" sequence, by which my dearest *La-*
" *vinia* and her charming friend were
" so greatly terrified. And now, ma-
" dam (taking the hand of his amiable
" mistress, with eyes expressing the
" very soul of contrition), will you, can
" you forgive a crime unpremeditated?
" Can you forget that I have contami-
" nated

" nated the purity of your mind with
" dark, injurious ſuſpicions?"

" INDEED (ſaid Miſs *Gilford*, in the
" ſweeteſt voice imaginable) I ought
" not to forgive you; for had I not
" ſtood on a very tottering baſis, ſuch
" a wretch as Sir *William More* would
" not ſo eaſily have puſhed me from
" your good opinion: yet his uncom-
" mon arts muſt, I think, plead in
" your favour."

" EXALTED goodneſs! (replied Mr.
" *Gore)* every hour of my life will be
" too little——"

" STOP, Sir (interrupting him) your
" pardon is not yet paſſed my lips,
" though I can aſſure you it has long
" been made out in my heart. Com-
" ply with one requeſt, and——"

"OH name it, my beloved Miſs "*Gilford* (cried Mr. *Gore)*, and hate "me if I deny it."

"PRAY, Sir (ſaid *Maria)* will you "pardon me if I preſume to make "another?"

"YOU do me honour, madam," ſaid he.

"WELL, but firſt (continued Miſs "*Coventry)* let *Lavinia* make her's; "and, as her friend, I ſhall afterwards "venture to deliver mine."

"I WILL then; and remember, Sir, "you bad me hate you, if I find my "boon diſregarded. Promiſe me that "you will never challenge the worſt "of men, and that no behaviour of "his ſhall ever make you forget that "promiſe."

"WHAT

"WHAT hard conditions!" replied Mr. *Gore*.

"SUCH as you ſhould accept with "pleaſure (interrupted his venerable "uncle); and ſuch as your heart ought "to have ſuggeſted, had this lady "never mentioned them."

"BUT what will the world ſay, "ſhould I let him go unpuniſhed? "You know, my dear Sir, I am paſ- "ſionate: how then can I rein in my "juſt reſentment?"

"I WILL put you in a way to com- "mand it (returned he), if you liſten "to my advice. In the place of re- "ſentment ſubſtitute pity: look on "him as below the former, and only "worthy of the latter, as he is a fellow- "creature, ſtamped with the image of

" his Divine Creator, though he has ſo
" vilely debaſed it. Let this one con-
" ſideration inſtantly baniſh every
" thought of revenge: for if his God,
" whom he has much higher of-
" fended, permits him to live, perhaps
" to repent, ſhall you try to ſhorten
" thoſe days his goodneſs has allowed
" him? Reflect a moment: in that
" moment ſuppoſe this miſerable crea-
" ture, at the laſt day, upbraiding you
" for thoſe torments denounced againſt
" him: But for you, he will then ſay,
" I might now have been happy; you
" cut me off when my ſins were at
" the higheſt."

" I own all you ſay, Sir (replied
" Mr. *Gore)* to be extremely juſt; but
" ſhould ſuch a man, for ſuch a crime,
" go unpuniſhed, what next may he
" not attempt? Shall none revenge

" the

" the wrongs of thoſe he renders mi-
" ſerable?"

" YES (returned the ſage), there is
" one, and only one, who has a right
" to do it.

" HAS any perſon a greater (ſaid
" Mr. *Gore*, colouring) than myſelf?
" Prove but this, and I ſwear from
" that inſtant his life ſhall be ſafe as
" the deareſt of my friends."

" AGREED (cried the elder Mr.
" *Gore*). Thoſe ladies (addreſſing *La-*
" *vinia* and *Maria*) ſhall be our um-
" pires. How, young gentleman, ap-
" ply you thoſe words, *Vengeance is*
" *mine, ſays the Lord, and I will re-*
" *pay it*."

" I WILL not (ſaid his nephew, " with the moſt ineffable grace) aſk " to hear the deciſion of our fair " judges, but confeſs myſelf con- " vinced, and that I ſhould have done " a very unwarrantable action. Here " then I ſincerely promiſe my dear " *Lavinia*, and you, Sir, never to pur- " ſue Sir *William* with a thought of " revenge."

MISS *Gilford* both by words and looks expreſſed the joy this declaration gave her; every feature appeared newly animated; the roſe, which had been for ſome months faded, ſeemed at this inſtant to receive a ſecond birth; it ſprang up ſpontaneous; the beauteous glow and infant ſweetneſs of the bud ſpoke in her bluſhing cheek.

MR.

MR. *Gore*'s pleaſure is only to be ſuppoſed by thoſe in a ſimilar ſituation; his uncle's was not leſs exquiſite, tho' more ſerene and tranquil; whilſt Miſs *Coventry*'s was little inferior to either, ſeeing the friend ſhe loved ſo unexpectedly reſtored to the man her heart approved.

LAVINIA's curioſity was lulled aſleep by the preſence of her lover; but it was not the ſame with *Maria*, who now reminded Mr. *Gore*, he had not yet granted her requeſt, nor permitted her to make it.

HE aſked her pardon, and ſaid ſhe need only mention her commands to have them inſtantly obeyed.

"I DARE not command (replied ſhe, "with an air of the utmoſt ſprightli-

" neſs); I am the humbleſt ſuppliant " in the world, and ſue for your inte- " reſt with this moſt revered of men, " that he will condeſcend to tell us " why he flies from ſociety? why he " buries himſelf in this ſubterraneous " dwelling?"

" MY deareſt child (replied the " elder Mr. *Gore)*, you ſhall not need " my nephew's interceſſion; I am " ready to ſatisfy your curioſity, after I " have led you through my little ha- " bitation."

LAVINIA's lover having deſired the honour of her hand, " Come, my " good young lady (continued he), will " you accept the hand of an old " man?" to *Maria*.

" GLADLY,

"GLADLY, Sir (ſhe replied); and "with the ſame confidence I would "my father's. Indeed, your ſenti- "ments are ſo like my dear parent's, "that I cannot help looking on you "with reverential duty."

"HARRY (ſaid he, applying to his "nephew), could you have thought "vanity would have found its way to "this humble rock? But I now find "walls of flint will not exclude it. "Look round, my charming gueſt: "what ſee you here to make me vain? "yet I feel I really am ſo; nay, per- "haps more, and with greater cauſe, "than a monarch on his throne. Has "not this deſerving young creature "(ſaid he) regarded me with duty? But "ſay, my ſweet child, will you per- "mit me to love you with a father's "fondneſs?"

"WILL I (repeated the delighted "*Maria)!* O Heavens, how you op- "preſs me with goodneſs! My dear, "dear Sir, from this hour look on me "with a paternal eye. How happy "in two ſuch parents!"

"CHARMING excellence (wiping "away the tears that fell on his fur- "rowed cheek)! Yes, you are, you "ſhall be my adopted daughter. Yet, "alas! I have no inheritance to be- "queath you: all my poſſeſſions are "ſorrows."

"AH, my dear father, deny me not "a child's part; give me a portion out "of thoſe ſorrows. This I entreat the "more, as I have really none of my "own."

"GRACIOUS

"GRACIOUS Heaven (replied the "sage) has at laſt looked on me with "a pitying eye: it ſends me another "child: again I am a father. And "you will ſometimes, my deareſt *Ma-* "*ria*, viſit me? Your natural parent "would not deny me to ſhare with him "this comfort, did he know how I "have been deprived of every other."

MISS *Coventry* replied, there ſhould paſs but few days in which ſhe would not viſit him, and petition his bleſſing.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

HERE they were joined by *Lavinia* and Mr. *Gore*. The latter, ſeeing Miſs *Coventry* and his uncle engaged in converſation, had gently drawn the object of his wiſhes to the farther end of the cell, and there whiſpered a thouſand vows of conſtancy, far from diſpleaſing to his fair miſtreſs, if her countenance correſponded with her heart.

THEY now quitted the firſt apartment, by a door which the ladies had not before perceived, each of their conductors a candle in his hand; a caution abſolutely neceſſary, as this cavity

cavity had no light like the outer room, to which it was conveyed by a ſky-light ſo curiouſly contrived, as not to be viſible on the outſide.

AFTER proceeding about forty yards, they could plainly diſtinguiſh the ſound of waters; and expreſſing their ſurpriſe, the elder Mr. *Gore* told them they were within twenty yards of a river; "the moſt beautiful, perhaps, "(added he) in *Europe:* nay, I queſ-"tion if my daughter and Miſs *Gil-*"*ford* will not, at firſt, imagine they "are by ſome magic conveyed to *Mex-*"*ico* or *Peru.*—But (continued he) let "me beg my dear children will in-"dulge an old man's requeſt, and "ſuffer me to lead them a few ſteps "with their eyes blinded."

THEY

THEY conſented to this propoſal, and in leſs than a minute were told they might look about them.

WHO can deſcribe their aſtoniſhment to ſee the roof, which was in the ſhape of a dome, hung with ten thouſand ſparkling gems: diamonds, emeralds, and rubies, appeared above, below, on every ſide.—What ſtill added to the amazing beauty of this place, was a tranſparent river, that ran on one ſide, whoſe clearneſs reſembled chryſtal.

LAVINIA and *Maria* having expreſſed their ſurpriſe and pleaſure, began to examine more minutely thoſe dazzling gems which met their ſight.—"Was ever any thing ſo charming "(ſaid Miſs *Coventry*) as that emerald "creſcent!

" creſcent! It makes me wiſh to be a " follower of *Diana*, to have it placed " upon my forehead."

" INDEED, it is very charming (re- " plied Miſs *Gilford*); yet I confeſs " that diamond which repreſents a " heart pleaſes me infinitely more. But " pray, gentlemen, (ſaid they both) " ſay by what *ignis fatuus* theſe things " appear to us as they do?"

" YOU call this deception by a " proper name (replied their venerable " guide); it is an *ignis fatuus* that " deceives you: a falſe light dazzles " the opticks of your ſight."

SAYING this he extinguiſhed the candles, and opening a ſmall door, the ſun, which had been for two hours excluded, again ſaluted them; but

ſcarce

ſcarce could its enlivening rays make amends for the beautiful proſpect that vaniſhed at its approach:—the diamonds, rubies, and emeralds were now metamorphoſed into congealed drops, which by the nature of the cavern petrified ere they could deſcend: the creſcent and heart were ſtill viſible, tho' no longer deſirable ornaments.

The Ladies had not time given them to make many reflections on this ſudden and ſurpriſing change; new beauties waited their attention: the proſpect, indeed, was not extenſive, yet every thing that could charm the ſight, or pleaſe the imagination, ſeemed collected into this one little ſpot.

WHAT delighted them in a particular manner was the river, which had

had its riſe in the cavern, continued through a ſmall but beautiful plain, where Nature had been laviſh of her choiceſt gifts. To congratulate it on leaving its dark priſon, flowers and ſhrubs were here planted by her hand in ſuch abundance, that it might not improperly have been termed a wilderneſs of ſweets. Through theſe it playfully wandered till a moroſe wood, envious of the happineſs of its ſituation, allured it to its gloomy abode, where being once arrived, it was ſoon obſcured from the ſight.

THEIR ſage Conductor having faſtened the door through which they entered the plain, proceeded to a ſmall houſe, which the Ladies had not perceived, being planted thick on each ſide with trees. As they came near, they were met by a man of about fifty, who

who was ſo ſtruck with ſeeing *Lavinia* and Miſs *Coventry*, that for ſome time he could not utter a ſyllable.

"HONEST *Simon*, (ſaid Mr. *Gore*) "we are come upon you a little ab- "ruptly; but no matter: let us ſee "what the houſe affords. Come, is "*Betty* within?"

"No, and pleaſe your Honour," he replied, ſomewhat recovered from his ſurpriſe by the manner in which his old maſter accoſted him; "*Betty* is "gone to the *Wink* to fill the tea-ket- "tle; tho' it wants more than an hour "of your Honour's uſual time."

"IT does ſo (ſaid the good Her- "mit); but we are willing to ſhew "theſe Ladies we are not ſo very ſa- "vage as our firſt appearance beſpoke "us."

THIS

THIS hint was enough for *Simon*, who, after making half a ſcore bows to their ladyſhips, conducted them into a parlour: but without that appellation it might have been miſtaken for a bower of jeſſamines and woodbines, the walls being entirely covered with their luxuriant branches, which being now in full bloom, exhaled a fragrance hardly to be rivalled in either *India*.

MR. *Harry Gore* took a hand of each fair damſel, and ſeated them in a window which overlooked a parterre of flowers ending in a green ſlope, which ſerved as a velvet margin to that river I have juſt deſcribed.

"WHAT a paradiſe, Mr. *Gore* "(ſaid both Ladies), have you brought "us to! Was ever any thing ſo hea- "venly! Ah (continued Miſs *Gil-*

"*ford*

" *ford* with inimitable ſweetneſs)! one " would think this day was deter- " mined to make me remember it " with pleaſure to the end of my " life."

THE entrance of his uncle did not prevent this tranſported lover from preſſing to his faithful heart the hand of his *Lavinia*.

MISS *Coventry*'s attention was now engaged by a pretty playful ſquirrel, faſtened by a ſmall chain to the window; which the elder gentleman obſerving, immediately giving freedom to the little animal, preſented it to his adopted daughter.

THIS preſent, though of no real value, yet as it came from the perſon ſhe revered next to her father, ſhe received

ceived with delighted acknowledgements.

BETTY now entered with tea, followed by *Simon* with fruit, wine, and cakes; and as ſoon as the former was removed, the old gentleman did not wait to be reminded of giving them the particulars, which he doubted not had greatly raiſed their curioſity, and addreſſed them in the following words:

"I KNOW not, my dear children, "what right I have to give you un- "eaſineſs; yet if you inſiſt on the per- "formance of my promiſe, I am now "ready to fulfil it."

"BY no means would we requeſt "it (anſwered Miſs *Gilford*) if the re- "cital will renew your grief."

"THAT it cannot do (he rejoin- "ed); my unhappineſs is but too freſh "in

" in my memory; it is ever before
" me; it is interwoven with my very
" exiſtence; nor can I for a moment
" loſe ſight of my ſorrows, till I
" am called to that place from
" whence they will be ſhut out. I
" diſtreſs you, Ladies! Wipe off thoſe
" ſympathetick drops, or I cannot
" think of proceeding."

THE ſnowy cambrick, though not more dazzling white than their complexions, was now applied to their eyes, by the aſſiſtance of which the heavenly azure and ſparkling jet were again reſtored to their native luſtre; and Mr. *Gore* entered upon his hiſtory, as will be found in the next volume.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.

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